'LOVE' AS THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT : CHANGING ISSUES IN MODERN THEOLOGY WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO 'JUSTICE'

G. Starr Bowen

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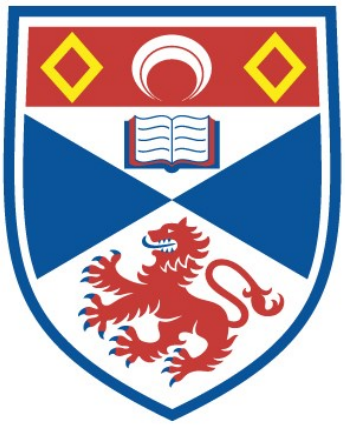

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"LOVE" AS THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT:

Changing Issues in Modern Theology, with Particular Reference to "Justice"

PH.D. Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of St. Andrews, February 4th, 1983. by

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UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

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RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

How shall we continue to speak of God's love in a world which continues to be flagrantly frustrated by human injustice? The question is not so much concerned with theodicy as with the task of human loving. Loving justly, so that ever wider structures of justice are made possible in history, must be a human endeavour which correlates with a divine precept, mandate, and command. Indeed, Christians are 'commanded' to love, both "one another" and the neighbour as oneself, in correspondence with the love revealed and exemplified by Christ. The 'thesis' developed in this research is given, to the Church and to the world, in Jesus' word to his disciples:

> As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Dwell in my love. If you heed my commands, you will dwell in my love, as I have heeded my Father's commands and dwell in his love...
>
> This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. (John 15:9-12)

The task of loving is a problem of authentic correlation. We must first reflect upon the ministry of Jesus, and upon the sort of love or loves which he exemplified among his contemporaries. Then we must discover ways of interpreting the commanded love for our own day, and of putting such a love into practice. The quest for justice parallels and criticizes our quest for love.

New Testament scholarship and theological reflection of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have interpreted Christian love in many ways. As a convenient starting point for evaluating interpretations of Christian love, the proposition is suggested that an appropriate practice of love, correlating with the love of Christ, should lead, if ever so subtly, to the creation of justice in contemporary societies of human beings, and provide foundations for greater justice in future societies.

A 'symposium' of selected 'speakers' on the characteristics of Christian love is 'convened'. From the nineteenth century we consider the thoughts of Ludwig Feuerbach and Soren Kierkegaard,

and briefly, of the 'young Hegel'. These thinkers set the tone for much of the discussion, and in their ideas are distinguished certain dominant themes which will continue to characterize love-talk in the twentieth century.

The twentieth century discussion takes the form of a 'debate' between 'neo-orthcdox' Protestants, Latin American 'liberation theologians', and North American 'theologians of process'. But the debate is complicated, because the lines of division are not always distinctly drawn. We consider the most germane propositions of Anders Nygren, whose strict division between agape and eros has had a continuing impact upon Christian theology. Briefly we compare the thoughts of Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Burnaby, and Karl Barth, and their impact upon the discussion of Christian love which began with Nygren's radical definitions. We observe, for example, how Karl Barth moves away from the early 'neo-orthodox' concerns, answering the critics of neo-orthodoxy with a holistic interpretation of love which melts into action, nct determined, but sustained, by the covenanted love of God for his creatures.

The latter part of this 'symposium' is an attempt to hear, without prejudging, two of the most prominent interpretations of love in contempcrary thought. The Latin American theologians of liberation, since the late nineteen-sixties, have projected a view of Christian love which is thoroughly interpolated with the call for justice, on their continent expecially, and also throughout the world. Their viewpoints elevate the discussion to a new plane, in which theory and practice are profoundly interdependent.

Although Alfred North Whitehead wrote in the early twentieth century, his followers, in the United States especially, have begun to build upon his ideas, sc that the 'process theology' of the eighties is intimately related to Whitehead's work in the twenties. Although the literature is massive, a hearing of Whitehead himself seems important if his ideas about love are to be set in relation to the genre which he inspired.

Influenced significantly by the synthesizing method of Whitehead, the concluding chapter aims at no definitive conclusion. However, in recognition of the criterion that love should be creative of justice, certain related issues are distinguished which might inform theology's love-talk for the future. For example, recent textual analysis of the New Testament has demonstrated that the word agape has no consistent usage in the Bible as a word for love superseding all others. The perpetuation of agape as a 'technical' word for a definite 'type' of love, is not justified by scripture, and may obscure the profound intimacy of love to justice. Similarly, the relationship of faith to Christian love has the capacity to militate against love's relation to justice. The idea of eros may entail elements of Christian love and justice not normally construed by interpretations of agape. Response to God's love may be inhibited by exclusive, elite, or essentially egocentric characterizations of Christian love. Other insights pertinent to love's relation to justice, its affiliation with feeling, and its universal quality, are suggested.

Although the final chapter is an attempt to provide a stepping-stone toward future love-talk which may be more authentically attuned to the justice-issues of our world, the main contribution of this research may be in the collation of the diverse points of view which the selected authors represent. There is very little that can be said about love which is truly novel; the idea of love has perhaps the longest and most profound history in literature. In the practice of love, however, the novelty of creative synthesis awaits and beckons the adventurous.

DEDICATION

In deepest gratitude to Christina, my wife,
and to Bill, my teacher and supervisor ——
without whose respective patience, nurture,
and friendship, over many years, the following
inquiry should never have achieved this form...

This thesis is dedicated to my son,
Jordan Scott Tecton Bowen
who, somewhere in the middle of Chapter Five,
emerged as 'seven pounds of concrete love.'

'To know that what is impenetrable to us
really exists, manifesting itself as the
highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty
which our dull faculties can comprehend only
in their most primitive forms ——
this knowledge, this feeling is at the centre
of true religiousness...'

Albert Einstein

CONTENTS

PREFACE

A MORATORIUM ON 'LOVE'?

The Problem Simple

In 1969, as a first-year divinity student in Edinburgh, I was profoundly influenced by John McIntyre's book On the Love of God. I was being challenged then, by events in Vietnam, Northern Ireland, Prague, and the southern United States, to discover a theology which could make sense of those dilemmas and conflicts. The book brought home to me a concept of God whose grace cannot be interrupted by world historical crisis nor by human sin. McIntyre's simply written yet profound characterization of a loving God became the 'hook' on which I could hang my faith. As he described the Incarnation and the Atonement I began to see that the Christ event reveals not only the nature of God, but also the potential nature of humanity. "For at the very heart of the Bible where we meet God in devotion there stands the man that was called Jesus, and from that anthropos no proper theology can ever hope to escape."[1] "In the person of Jesus Christ there takes place the revelation not only of God, but also of man."[2]

I began to wonder how our love might, in some sense, resemble God's; how our inadequate attempts to make justice happen on this earth might in some way 'measure up' to God's love for all. From that time 'the love of God' appeared to me, more and more as the 'bottom line' of theology, preaching, pastoral care, and politics. God's love and our love did not seem quite as far apart as our history, and much of our theology, might imply.

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1. John McIntyre, On the Love of God, Collins, London, 1962, p. 62
2. ibid. p. 182.

The second, and more recent, influence stimulating my research into the idea of love comes from a seminar in which I participated at Duke University in 1979. The seminar was led by Frederick Herzog, on the subject of "History and Providence."[1] At the end of the semester some of us were invited to 'preach' to the class, integrating what we had learned in a relevant 'sermon'. Several of the sermons, mine included, attempted to resolve the apparent conflict between history and providence with copious references to divine and human love. When we had finished, Professor Herzog, who during the course had maintained a low profile with regard to his own opinions, offered his own summary. To our surprise he asserted that 'love' is an over-worked term in Christian theology. Love, he said, is theologically meaningless unless there is a corresponding emphasis upon the establishment of adequate 'justice structures' relating directly to the plight of the poor and the oppressed. Further, he stressed, until European and North American preachers and theologians are willing to involve themselves in direct action to establish justice, there should be a 'moratorium' on the use of the word 'love'. "Without these justice structures," he said, "we're kidding ourselves if we think we're loving."[2] For Herzog the tragedies of history cannot be attributed to any lack of emphasis on the idea of love by the Church. What is missing is the establishment of justice, the condition for love's growth.

The tension between the above influential viewpoints cannot be easily resolved. On the one hand there is the undeniably biblical assertion that God's love, and ours, is the very 'centre' of Christian theology. As McIntyre says, the Bible is 'about' the love of God.[3]

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1. cf. Langdon Gilkey, Reaping the Whirlwind, Seabury Press, New York, 1976 also, Patrick Gardiner, ed., Theories of History, Free Press, New York, 1959.
2. Verbatim quotation from Herzog's lecture. cf. Frederick Herzog, Justice Church, Orbis Maryknoll, New York, 1980, esp. Chapter 5.
3. McIntyre, On the Love of God, op. cit. p. 32

"Love must stand at the centre of our declaration of the Good News and radiate outwards to exercise a controlling influence in the moulding of our theological affirmations."[1] On the other hand, the hard sayings of the prophets and of Jesus leave us with the uneasy feeling that what Herzog says is just as biblical: "God's love cannot be used to sublimate the misery of oppression. We need to be utterly alert to the social dynamics of conflict that sublimate love."[2] Unfortunately, the oppression of orphans, widows, and strangers even by those who proclaim God's love has not greatly diminished since the days of Amos and Jesus. The critical point is whether our "theological affirmations" lead us to action. Are we doers of the word, or merely hearers and declarers?

This is not the place to compare and contrast the views of McIntyre and Herzog. Their difference, I suspect, is primarily one of emphasis. Despite the tension between love and justice, they have much in common, especially a profound interest in Christology.[3] Perhaps the apparent tension, between 'the love of God' and God's call for justice, is endemic to the nature of their enquiry. Both have noticed that we tend to cast Jesus in our own image, to make him the legitimation of our cultural mores.[4] Both eschew a cheap and easy individual piety, thinly wrapped in the 'security blanket' of God's love. Both acknowledge that the words, parables, and ministry of Jesus are able to cut through ego-centrism and exclusive group identity which lead to injustice. But the tension between their main emphases, love and justice respectively, is

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1. McIntyre, On the Love of God, op. cit. p. 32
2. Herzog, "Liberation and Imagination," Interpretation v. 32, Richmond, Virginia, p. 237; Also published in Justice Church, op. cit. p. 98.
3. cf. Herzog, Liberation Theology, Seabury Press, New York, 1972; also John McIntyre, The Shape of Christology, SCM, London, 1966
4. The seminal exponent of this observation is, of course, Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, E.T:W. Montgomery, A. & C. Black, London, 1910, pp. 397-400

probably indispensable to an understanding of Christ. Certainly there is no simple choice to be made - love or justice - which might make the tension disappear. The tension is in fact highlighted if we acknowledge McIntyre's insistence that the Bible is 'about' God's love. Herzog actually confirms McIntyre's emphasis on the radical nature of the love of God, if we take seriously the implication that we in the North have lost our privilege of speaking about love unless and until we get our thinking about justice right.[1]

Ideology, for better or for worse, is reflected in hermeneutics. 'The love of God' implicit in Jesus' activity among the rich, the poor, and the pompous demands constant reinterpretation in the light of changing conditions. Doctrinal formulations have a certain historical validity, but with them we import the ideologies of their age. The impinging history of Jesus of Nazareth resists definitive categories. As one New Testament scholar has put it, "As soon as we get too comfortable with Jesus, I think we may have missed him."[2] What was said about Jesus yesterday cannot simply be repeated today. The love of God keeps breaking the old moulds. Perhaps it is right that our interpretation of God's love is always yesterday's news. Somehow our old wineskins keep wearing out.

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1. Of various distinctions concerning global demography, I prefer the North-South designation as the least inappropriate. cf. "The Brandt Report":North - South: A Programme for Survival, Pan, London, 1980
2. Professor Hugh Anderson, New College, Edinburgh University; unpublished remark in lecture.

INTRODUCTION

TO DWELL IN LOVE...

1. The Task and Thesis

The task, quite simply, is to bring our talk and action into line with the creating, sustaining, redeeming, transforming love of God. There is no question of proposing a 'new thesis'- for it has already been given us:

> As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Dwell in my love. If you heed my commands, you will dwell in my love, as I have heeded my Father's commands and dwell in his love.
>
> This is my commandment[1]: love one another, as I have loved you.

We must not be too quick to pull out our critical, exegetical, and hermeneutical tools. We are dealing with a 'thesis' which is completely inseparable from 'method'. God's love is not dependent upon how we interpret it, but rather upon what has been done for us and how we respond to it in practice. The 'thesis' is the task. If we cannot identify the imperative in the indicative of God's love, then no hermeneutic will set it right for us. Our "theological affirmation" is precisely interpreted by our action. Our affirmation of the love of God is disclosed in our willingness to do justice (mispat) and love kindness (hesed) and thus walk humbly with our God (cf. Micah 6:8). God's love encompasses us, but without our response to its task and demand, we shall not "dwell" in it, and talk about it is empty talk. To be sure, God's love and human love are not ultimately opposed; an obedient response to the "command" indicates that we may "dwell" in the same love with which we have first been loved.

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1. John 15: 9-12. Although this saying has been interpreted as an exclusive logion meant only for an inner circle of disciples or for the Church, I am taking it as a universal and symbolic word to the total 'oikoumene' - the community of the world.(NEB)

Although the task is strenuous, we are not thrown back upon ourselves. We are not finally faced with an 'either/or'; even as we fail to perform the task, despite the enabling persuasiveness of God's love, we are infinitely given exactly what was required: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Finally, God's love covers a multitude of sins.

2. The Programme's Criterion

The proposition is that the theory of the love of God is not to be divorced from its practice. This proposition is given us in a form which is not subject to rational proof. Rather, it places upon us the responsibility of developing an adequate programme of compliance: "for each tree is known by its own fruit."[1] If it is at all conceivable that our love might resemble God's, that our loves shall "dwell" in his, it is important that we constantly examine our practice. There must be no mistake; the practice itself is indispensable. Its examination may then be conducted according to the criterion "as I have loved you". Such an examination is elusive however, because the criterion is always at a different point than when we last 'observed' it; it always goes before us.

The programme, a 'method' for evaluation of our practice of God's love, is thus dependent upon our interpretation of Christ's love for us: "Love one another, as I have loved you."[2] But this criterion must be construed in finite terms, whereas its real meaning is not really contiguous with any rational interpretation. Yet we are not faced with purely analogical or symbolic delimitation. The impact of the Incarnation, God's identification with human form, is that our finite language can have infinite meaning. Of course

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1. Luke 6:44
2. John 15:12 It would be erroneous to interpret this verse as encouragement toward martyrdom, implying that Christ died to demonstrate his love. Although the idea of sacrifice may be present here, it is only one possible expression of the wide authentic love demonstrated by Christ. Feeding the hungry, for example, might be even more authentic.

our reason is inadequate to express the ontological significance of "as I have loved you". But the criterion is brought to our understanding in the very 'fact' of love's having been expressed by Christ in a form which identifies with us, and which we are able to recognize. We can therefore draw our implications in faith that we need not be speaking nonsense, even though we speak of infinite things in limited language.

If we are to love 'as Christ loved us' we must posit some interpretation of his love, given the assumptions that (a) his love is always in creative flux, and (b) our interpretation must point from the phenomenological to the ontological, from the finite to the infinite. The critiques of McIntyre and Herzog help us to arrive at a programme whereby the criterion 'as Christ loved us' may be more adequately understood as a basis for a critique of human love in its attempt to 'measure up' to the love of God. The criterion 'as Christ loved us' may be construed, in our terms, as the creation of justice. The criterion is based upon Jesus' own interpretation that (1) the neighbour is to be loved as oneself, and is of equal worth before God, and (2) we are to behave toward others as we would like others to behave toward us.

Although it may be shocking to convert the infinite idea of the love of God into terms which we understand, this is no attenuation of God's love. "The glory of the Atonement, and its continuing mystery, is that both love and justice meet there and are fulfilled beyond any possibility that prophet or seer ever thought possible."[1] So McIntyre describes how the cross of Christ resolves the antithesis between God's love and his moral demand upon human kind. The ultimate justification which occurs at the Cross might be considered the final retributive justice which is accomplished for humanity, as

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1. McIntyre. On the Love of God. op. cit. p. 172

the ultimate effect of the love of God. The Cross is the ultimate creation of justice.

At the same time, the Cross heightens and enables distributive justice, that justice which was seen by the prophets as the purpose of the Law. That liberation observed by Paul, in which our justification frees us for righteousness, is distributive justice. Because we have no longer to worry about judgment, we are free for just living. As Herzog says, "We are called to liberate men and women from oppression, and that should suffice as an answer to the mystery of life."[1]

> There is nothing we need to learn except how we can share in God's struggle for justice. Obviously all of this does not happen without love. But God's love is first of all justice-love, the love of justice...What we are freed for is making choices in keeping with God's battle for justice.[2]

So we interpret "Love one another as I have loved you" to mean, practically, "Love one another so that justice is created." Retributive justice, after the Cross, is transformed into God's justification of humanity. The impact of God's justification of sinful humanity is that humans are liberated, and given an example, in order to distribute justice in the world. The distribution of justice, through all the relations of human beings, becomes the 'method' by which we may love 'as Christ has loved us'. Our love is criticized by its capacity to break down the barriers that separate human beings from each other, and humankind from all creation. Selfish loves are not the love of Christ, not that eminently just love by which we first are loved. Nevertheless, even our selfish loves are subject to God's purpose, and in that purpose they may increase in justice and creativity, perfected in their imperfection, so that even in evil lies the possibility of right.

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1. Herzog, Liberation Theology, op. cit. p. 41
2. Herzog, Justice Chruch, op. cit. p. 98

If there is a defect in the criterion, it is probably attributable to the diverse meanings of words like 'love' and 'justice'. Certainly they are not strict synonyms. Yet, in a sense, they may define each other. A love that is not just cannot be commensurate with the love of God. A justice that is not merciful, with a sense of passion, is not God's justice. If love continues to be defined merely in an egocentric emotional sense, and if justice continues to be defined retributively, then we have not noticed the radical redefinition of both terms by the Incarnation. In reinterpreting the criterion 'as I have loved you' to mean 'so that justice is created' there is no implication that we speak of logical or ontological equivalents. But practically, intuitively and imaginatively considered, there is an intimate correlation between love and justice. The correlation is unquestionably biblical. But more than this, it is profoundly characteristic of the imperative which lies within the indicative of God's love for humanity. The 'thesis' is given; if it cannot be adopted it cannot be proven. But if it can be adopted, its criterion may be developed in practice: "as I have loved you".

3. Other Criteria?

Every proposition must have a starting point, but a starting point need not exclude other essential elements which may arise in the course of discussion. Indeed, the selection of criteria needs to be both broad and specific enough to facilitate meaning without artifically limiting new relationships and criteria as they arise. In suggesting the criterion of justice as a starting point by which to examine the practice of love according to Christ's love for humanity, I would hope that the criterion will be able to shed light upon other essential elements associated with the general concept of 'the love of God' and its relation to practical human loves. For example, we may see that God's justice-creating activity in the Atonement has a pronounced effect upon the meaning of human

suffering; thus suffering may arise as a new criterion if we are to love one another as Christ has loved us. Or perhaps, in some way, the conception of beauty becomes transformed for us in an examination of the eminently just love which is apparent in the work of Christ, in his words and ministry. Perhaps, indeed, our concept of God himself may be radically altered through the juxtaposition of love and justice. The relationship of love to justice is in no way exclusive of other relationships and criteria. 'The creation of justice' is no simplistic reduction of the criterion 'as I have loved you'. But it is offered as one way of gaining insight into what it means to love according to the command of Christ.

If the idea of justice, in such diverse ways, is to help us to understand what it means to love, we must not be too quick to offer a definition of the word 'justice'. At the very least, we may note that the word is radically transformed by the ministry of Christ, and that its usual legal connotation is inadequate. On some level, human theories of justice are beckoned to 'correspond' with the practical examples of justice inherent in Jesus' ministry on earth, and also with that ultimate justification announced at the Cross. God's creation of justice, where it could not otherwise exist, continues to criticize and inspire the practice and temporal attributes of justice in every successive age.

In the contingency of human existence, 'the creation of justice' must be open to interpretation in ways which are correlative with that ultimate justice. For example, it may mean, but not be limited to, forgiveness of others just as we are forgiven. It may mean protection of the rights of human beings so that an environment is preserved or created in which love is possible. But in the light of God's justification of sinful human beings, the notion of justice as punishment is radically called in question. Even where penal justice is necessary, its purpose must be interpreted in distributive terms. Retributive justice is rendered obsolete by the Atonement.

Only in the broad sense of distributive justice is our justice able to identify and facilitate the possibility of loving 'as Christ has loved us'. Nevertheless, an artificial limitation of the parameters of this distributive justice is counterproductive to its interpretive effect upon the idea of love. If justice is able to interpret love, then love also helps to interpret justice.[1]

God's call for justice lies in the immediate background of an examination of love.[2] Its relevance to a Christian understanding of love should become clearer as our 'programme' is developed. It is the starting point for the development of the programme, the primary criterion which shall help us to interpret what love means. Nevertheless it is not the only criterion, for it should highlight other relationships and other criteria which also contribute to the practice of love 'as Christ loved us'. God's covenant culminating in the Cross redefines temporal justice so that it is to be conceived distributively, not retributively. The meaning and content of justice are more fully revealed as we more fully understand love.

4. The Programme (Methodical Practice)

If the criterion for love, 'as Christ loved us', may be construed practically as a love which creates justice, we may now entertain a 'programme' for the analysis of theology which purports to talk about love. Since neither God's love nor God's justice are static entities, the programme should be able to conceive movement and development in human love, as well as in the human's concept of love. The human practice of love, as well as the identification of possibilities in love itself, must be urged toward greater correlation with the model which is given in the Incarnation, and which

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1. For other views on the nature of justice in light of Christian love, cf. Gene Outka, Agape, An Ethical Analysis, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1972 Chapt. III (Outka documents and summarizes specific views of justice which set the discussion in greater perspective.)
2. cf. Lev. 19:1-37, esp. vss. 2, 18b, 33; Deut. 22:1-4; cf. also Ex. 20 and 24; Deut.5:1-21; Deut. 6:1-4

constantly goes before us. The programme must be repeated, and repeated again, as new relationships emerge by which God's love may be more practically and consciously integrated with our own. The programme has five parts. It implies both a 'practical method' for doing theology, and a 'methodical practice' for creating justice. (1) Identify the potential options. (2) Note the contradictions. (3) Discover and interpret the elements and criteria for justice. (4) Search for syntheses. (5) Relate the new theory to practice.

(1) Identify options.

In any theory of love we must first make intuitive, and so conditional, choices about the capacity of that theory to lead to a just practice of love in our world. The necessity and contingency of history have influenced, and will continue to influence, interpretations of the love of God and humanity's capacity to conform to that love. As we conditionally adapt, or partially refute theories of love we necessarily import and export ideologies, while we simultaneously add our own. To a certain degree, such ideologies are often capable of overcoming history, and as we are able to identify and incorporate these in new and relevant theory, we are not ruled by ideology. Thus we must 'demythologize' our options, while knowing that we ourselves are not history's last word. What we deny today may well be reaffirmed tomorrow. But in a hopeful sense, what we affirm or reaffirm today has the possibility of being reaffirmed tomorrow.

The authors I have chosen to consider represent only a small part of the wealth of thoughts about God's love. Indeed, consideration of each author is limited not only by (my) time and the space available, but also by numerous other definitive limitations of which I am only too aware. A thematic examination of any writer must necessarily abbreviate the range of the writer's concern and the interrelationships which may be required for adequate appreciation. We must content ourselves with brief sketches, highlighting topics

which seem important. The chosen selection for comparison is to a certain extent arbitrary; nevertheless, I have hoped that a general collage will emerge which will depict the wide inter-relationships which seem to characterize discussion about love from a theological perspective.

From the nineteenth century, I have selected Ludwig Feuerbach and Søren Kierkegaard. Not only are they interesting in their development of the idea of love, but their respective cumulative impact upon our century is inestimable in influence and diversification. The works of both have exceeded philosophical and theological applications. Their research and ideas are preserved in numerous contemporary forms and disciplines.[1] Both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard have had a significant impact upon theological love-talk in the twentieth century. Kierkegaard's influence is seen in the rise of neo-orthodoxy, particularly in the writings of Barth, Nygren, and Brunner. Feuerbach's conversion of theology into anthropology is notably apparent in the whole discussion of I-Thou dynamics which has spanned our century, particularly in relation to Martin Heidegger and Martin Buber. In addition, the Christian - Marxist dialogue can hardly be considered without reference to Feuerbach. Latterly, the rise of 'liberation theology' and its connection to Marx must, in an indirect sense at least, be related to Feuerbach's influence. Neither Feuerbach nor Kierkegaard may be adequately interpreted without an acknowledgement of their pre-eminent concern for justice on many levels. In choosing to expound Feuerbach and Kierkegaard, it is obvious that I have omitted numerous other writers from the nineteenth century. While there is some attention to Hegel, the reader may appreciate the necessity for representative, if somewhat arbitrary, selection.

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1. For example, my local doctor's surgery has hanging on the wall a poster advising against obesity: "You are what you eat!" Feuerbach's aphorism is indeed pervasive: "Der Mensch ist was er isst!" Similarly, a reference to Kierkegaard appears on page 94 of R.S. Laing's book on existential psychiatry, The Divided Self, Tavistock Publications, London, 1960. (Pelican, 1965)

A discussion of love in comtemporary theology would be grossly deficient without mention of Anders Nygren. Nygren's separation of love into 'types'-significantly 'Agape' as the love of the New Testament and Eros as the neo-platonic acquisitive love - has had a wide influence upon twentieth century love-talk. It is not limited to neo-orthodox theology, for the distinctions are preserved in diverse connections, particularly in the field of ethics.

Nygren's impact has provoked various alternative expositions of the idea of love, and something must be said about these. Although we shall not have time to discuss Nygren's critics, such as John Burnaby, at length, references to Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, Karl Barth, and others may help to demonstrate the diversification of the theme of love in contemporary Christian theology. As we shall see, the criterion of 'the creation of justice' may assist an analysis.

The idea of love is a recurrent theme in modern Liberation Theology and some attempt at an assessment seems to be required. An assessment is particularly important, because in this instance, love is indeed set in the context of a demand for justice. The multitude of authors dealing with liberation themes renders comprehensive examination difficult. I have elected to concentrate upon the liberation theologians of South America.

North American 'process theology' has been a developing force in talk about God, and of God's attribute of love, since the writings of Alfred North Whitehead. Despite the many interpretations of Whitehead, I have chosen to give particular attention to Whitehead himself. Whitehead reminds us of certain concerns of Plato, Hegel, and Feuerbach, but he also adds his own 'novelty'. On the topic of love, his viewpoint is comprehensive and innovative. His thought may provide the ground for further syntheses of the diverse characterizations of love throughout the history of theology. Like his notion

of love, Whitehead's connection of love with justice is intriguing and open-ended.

(2) Note Contradictions

In the light of the criterion that our love is to create justice, contradictions arise during the consideration of the 'options'.

(a) Apparent contradictions may be identified internally in a writer's thought. For example, in the light of the criterion of justice we might note that an attempt to stress worship as an essential element of love for God may inadvertently subjugate active and inclusive love to the concerns of an individual or corporate elite. The criterion of justice would help to question such an elitism, and identify the need for a better relationship between piety and practice.

(b) Contradictions occur, which may or may not be substantial, in a comparison of different authors' thematic interests relating to the idea of love. Thus we observe that Feuerbach's view of love implies the negation of faith, while Kierkegaard's concept of love is dependent upon faith. Although such contradictions cannot easily be reconciled, if at all, it may be helpful to relate contradictory notions of love to the requirement that love should be able to create justice. In a limited way, some of the apparent contradictions between authors may find their synthesis through consideration of, and relation to, the idea of justice.

(c) Other types of contradictions may appear during the course of examination and comparison. Particularly we must note 'intuitive' contradictions and 'practical' contradictions. Intuitive contradictions are by nature difficult to classify. Generally, we must take note of a certain 'feeling' which may arise as some author's concept of love becomes a bit too rational, a bit too hypostatized, a bit too systematic. Such a feeling, correlated with one's own subjective sense of the justice inherent in the Incarnation, may help to identify

gaps between logic and experience. Of course our feeling may be wrong; but so may any attempt to apply reason, in a definitive way, to an experience which demands the most transcendent rational method possible.

Similarly, it is not always possible to reconcile some theory of love with what is conceivable in practice. There has been a traditional tendency to see God's love in such divine terms that his love seems barely related to the human condition. For example, Reinhold Niebuhr was constrained to develop such a concept of sacrificial, disinterested love, in God's sphere, that the human sphere must be satisfied with a pragmatism bearing little resemblance to the love revealed at the Cross.[1] Niebuhr's view may be the logical application of much of the theology which has separated the theory of divine love from human practice. The apparent contradiction between God's love and ours leads us, in the light of the criterion of justice, to a more related theory and a better practice; not to the perpetuation of alienation between God and humanity, and certainly not to an affirmation of God at the expense of humanity.

(3) Discover and Interpret the Elements and Criteria for Justice

The 'hermeneutics' which may arise in the course of the examination of our 'options' need not be over-elaborated. We begin with the criterion that love, or any other theological theory, should lead to justice in our world, and in the light of the creation of justice we may be able to identify certain other elements and criteria which will contribute to a better practice of love and theology among our own contemporaries. We should be alert to the subtle effect of ideology in the identification of these authentic criteria.

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1. cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, Faber & Faber, London 1954, pp. 106-107. Niebuhr talks about an "insufferable sentimentality" which should be replaced by "a pragmatic attitude".

Herzog has argued that, although we cannot totally escape ideology, we must interpret the Bible in such a way that we are less and less inhibited either by our own world view or the particular and somewhat exclusive world view of the New Testament.[1] He has seen God's call for justice as a 'hermeneutic' which forces us to examine all ideology in light of Christ's ministry among the poor and the oppressed. If we are to discover authentic criteria for the talk and practice of love we must not prejudge interpretations and relationships which call into question sacrosanct beliefs and ideals. Justice constantly requires different sets of evaluative terms in successive societies. The elements of justice are interpreted by our ability to put them into practice; a more practical interpretation is always demanded, but the practice is continuously beckoned toward the precepts of Christ.

(4) Search for Syntheses

Without suggesting that history is essentially dialectical in character, we should respect the subtle dialectic in examination and refutation, in the progress which often results from trial and error, and in the indispensable distinction between good and evil which may occur through experience in changing conditions. In analyzing the thought and experience of others, we must be careful to avoid overarching affirmations or refutations. The latter twentieth century cannot be encapsulated within an earlier 'system'. But neither are our problems and tasks totally remote from those of earlier epochs. A responsible consideration of love in our day should neither be determined by, nor unaware of, earlier wisdom.

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1. Frederick Herzog, "Liberation Hermeneutic as Ideology Critique?" Interpretation, Richmond, Va. Vol. 28, pp 387 ff. (This observation, of course, was also made by Rudolf Bultmann) (cf. Hans-Werner Bartsch ed. Kerygma and Myth, E.T. R.H. Fuller, S.P.C.K. London, 1972)

We do not have the privilege of asserting total consistency or 'purity' in the idea of love. We are dealing with a concept which has a long and respectable history, despite numerous contradictions and tragedies in its development. What love means for us must be threshed out in each generation. The threshing-floor is our own application. Our syntheses must be made in hope, courageous in the knowledge that throughout existence and experience, 'the hybrid rules'.

(5) Theory Related to Practice

The final part of our 'programme' cannot be accomplished on paper. (In a sense, it is therefore imaginary). Nevertheless, it is an essential part of the programme of examining and correcting our theory of love so that it correlates better with the love with which Christ has loved us. Our theory should lead to a <u>just</u> practice, in all our relations between 'I and thou', as well as between 'us and them'. Indeed, the distinction between the individual and the other person becomes radically challenged as we learn to love the neighbour <u>as</u> oneself.

The emphasis upon ideas and concepts, coincident with a growth in communication and education, has led to a confident interpretation of our modern experience of the world. At the same time, however, there has been a tendency to put so much faith in our ability to interpret the world that we have often neglected the tools of change. One of the most prophetic (if not completely unbiased) critiques of the modern intellect is Karl Marx's eleventh "Thesis on Feuerbach". "Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."[1]

We must have no doubt whatsoever that the theory of the love of God is inseparable from practice. "You will dwell in my love if you heed my commands."[2] "Truly I say to you, as you did it to

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1. Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"; In <u>Marx: Early Writings</u>, E.T. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton, Penguin 1975, p. 423
2. John 15:10

one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."[3] "No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."[4] "If any one says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."[5] "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."[6] Without practice, the programme is incomplete.

5. The Problem Complex

It is evident that we cannot simply declare a 'moratorium' on love-talk if our theory and practice are to be correlated with the witness of the Incarnation and the Cross. In some way which we must constantly strive to understand, both love and justice meet at the Atonement. We have been given an example which beckons our practice, and the inadequacy of our loves is no excuse for a continued separation between the love of God and the human ability to 'measure up'. The complex problem, given our inadequacy in loving, is: "How shall we talk about God's love in a world full of injustice?" And the onus of the question is even greater: "What shall we do about the injustice which calls our love in question?"

Obviously, there are no simple answers. Herzog's complaint, that the Church's love is not ordinarily identified with the cause of justice, cannot simply be written off. There is indeed a crisis of credibility surrounding the use of the word love by modern preachers and theologians. Justice is an intimately related issue, particularly when talk about love obscures an active participation in, or the tacit approval of, political and economic inequality, exploitation, and oppression. When the alleviation of injustice becomes the agenda

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3. Matthew 25:40
4. I John 4:12
5. I John 4:20
6. I John 5:3

which replaces a sentimental emphasis upon love - a kind of 'cheap grace' symptomatic of our age - we are forced back into the hard analysis which must consider not only changing conditions, but also the motives and theory which will lead to practice. Thus, we must interpret love, 'as Christ has loved us', to mean an active search for just and equitable relationships between human beings, in which love is not only a sentiment, but a creative surge toward greater possibilities in an often frustrated world.

Such a love, however, is an elusive objective. The sheer diversity of authors who have written about love makes a balanced view difficult to formulate. Much of the work is somewhat biased and polemical. Even where there is a fair and open attempt to consider love from several sides, there is often an unfortunate emphasis upon jargon which artificially defines love to mean something else than what most people mean by the term.

The analysis of love in contemporary cultural usage further complicates the problem. Christopher Lasch, a modern cultural analyst, tells us that love has become a word for the projection of an individual's emotional requirements.[1] Like happiness, it is different things to different people. It is allied to expectations of life-style, security, and romance. Although theologians may need to draw their own distinctions, there appears to be a flagrant neglect of some correlation with the 'love' expressed in countless records, films, and novels. As Herzog observes, "There is just the plain fact that there are other people living in this world besides theologians."[2] The need for some application of a credible, justice-conscious theological idea of love to the popular notion of it is rendered particularly critical by the rampant materialism perpetuated

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1. Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism, Norton, New York, 1978 p. 13
2. Herzog, "Liberation Hermeneutic as Ideology Critique?" op. cit. p. 393

in modern cultural usage by the mass media and commercial interests who have proven an ability to redirect choices based upon the exploitation of latent, psychological, love-ideals.[1]

The biblical witness alone does not seem to be sufficient to tell us how to speak about love. Throughout the New Testament there is an element of tension between the 'good news' that Christians have been released from bondage to sin, and the recurrent fact that sin is committed. This tension can be observed in Paul's writings. "God's love is poured into our hearts," but, as Paul himself attested, "I can will what is right but I cannot do it."[2] Paul was not able to resolve the tension between the spirit and the flesh, the mind and the body. Yet he was adamant that human beings under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit, raised to new life with Christ, could find a capacity for loving activity in the furore of this world.[3]

Too often theologians have fallen into a description of an ethereal 'love of God' so remote from human character, so typified by sacrifice, so utterly selfless, that love in the model of the Sermon on the Mount or I Corinthians 13 has frankly been deemed incredible, or relegated to an other-wordly existence. The hypostatization of love in such divine terms appears to perpetuate a dualism which has done nothing to foster justice in this world, and which is foreign to the eminently involved love exemplified by Jesus and preached by Paul. The tension is there, to be sure, between God's love and human behaviour, between the spirit and the flesh, between love for friends and love for enemies, between love of self and love of neighbour. But throughout the New Testament and much of the Old, the tension seems suspended in a holistic focus. It cannot

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1. cf. Wilson Brian Key, Subliminal Seduction, Ad Media's Manipulation of a Not-So-Innocent America, Prentice Hall, Inglewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973 Key ably demonstrates the secular abuse of love in the media.
2. Romans 5:5; 7:18
3. cf. Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul, Abingdon, Nashville, 1978, pp.112 ff. "Paul's preaching of love does not stand alongside his emphasis on justification by faith, but is vitally related to it."

easily be resolved either by an emphasis upon 'justification by faith' nor by some easy modern proclamation of a "groovy kind of love".[1]

Although the problem of love-talk in theology is concerned with a doctine of God, an analysis of human nature, and the relation between them, the crux of the matter is finally construed by individual and corporate freedom. Whether a response to 'the love of God' comes as the result of a Damascus Road encounter - some "new birth" - or from a sober appeal through the intellect to a sensitivity which enables a recognition of the self in the neighbour, is perhaps a minor question. When theology and anthropology have been brought together in Christology, we still are left with the dilemma of the rich young ruler. Does our affirmation lead us to action? Can my love be construed as justice? Finally, the question cannot be solved theoretically.

We must insist that the idea of love is an essential "focus" for Christian theology - for talk about God and the human response to God's love.[2] But the diversity of love-talk, in some cases remote from a practical concern for justice in a frustrated world, indicates that there is much work to be done to bring talk about love in line with an appropriate response to God's call for justice. As the world becomes more populated, more technically complex, yet smaller due to the impact of commerce and communication, theology must put its love-talk into forms which are not limited by the history of dogma, and which do not intimate an alliance with one demographic system against another. Contemporary theology must be concerned with contrasting, yet complementary, views of love which may yet

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1. Of course there are many alternatives between the extremes, some of which may be explored below. (The song "A Groovy Kind of Love" was a popular hit in 1966, recorded by The Mind Benders.)
2. cf. George Newlands, Theology of the Love of God, Collins, London 1980. Chapter 2, pp. 26 ff. Newlands talks about "love as focus."

become synthesized in human experience. Theology's milieu includes solitary individuals seeking to escape their solitude, as well as great communities struggling to co-exist. Love, in the context of justice, envisages authentic relationships in wide communities, but without eclipsing individuals.

Primary for theology is the relationship between God and humanity. But this relationship cannot be explored without provoking a discussion of numerous social and philosophical problems. A credible theology must be willing to examine the views of a variety of authors, from different persuasions. Artifical delimitation according to agreement and apparent consistency does the topic no service. Perhaps the observation may be justified that, on the topic of love, a diversity of interpretation is like the colours produced by a prism. The beauty of the single light can hardly be appreciated until it is refracted.

The task is to bring talk and action into line with the creating, sustaining, redeeming, transforming love of God. The task is elusive because God's love is always at a different point than when we last 'observed' it. But if our love is construed by the creation of justice, there is a certain 'probability' of some 'correlation' between divine and human love.[1]

6. Purpose

Since our 'thesis' has already been given, taking in every age the form of Christ's command, that human beings are to love each other in correlation with his own infinitely just love, the 'proof' of the thesis lies only in the practice and not in theological extrapolation and interpretation. We are encouraged to make the thesis practical in terms which we can internalize as a faith that <u>works</u>, through love and by loving. The emphasis rests upon

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1. A theological adaptation of Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty, first formulated in 1927-Definition artificially influences the defined, and can only be approximate, or 'probable'.

the work, or rather upon the 'energy' required (energoumenē); not primarily upon the faith.

Nevertheless, there is indeed a purpose in reformulating and reinterpreting the subtle structures of faith, particularly emphasizing the broad range of beliefs about love which enable its practice. Ludwig Feuerbach has noticed that human creativity must originally take form in the imagination, and the imagination is constituted by what the human mind conceives and believes to be true, practical, or worth pursuing. Only by re-examining the wealth of human thoughts about love may we make those thoughts relevant to our activity in the present. Only by exposition, critical analysis, and sensible adaptation do ancient ideas gain contemporary persuasiveness.

As George Newlands, in his Theology of the Love of God, has observed, we live in a pluralistic age.[1] We can hope for no easy syntheses between all the theories of love, nor can we even hope to consider them all. Yet, as philosophers from Empedocles to Tillich have noted, there is within the idea of love a tendency toward reconciliation of opposites and an urge toward harmony. In this sense, the love which Christ commanded "impels us" towards reconciliation. As love has the capacity to overcome alienation, human beings have the capacity to find new possibilities and form new syntheses from old contradictions. Toward this purpose, and to the practical development of such possibilities and syntheses in history, this research is directed.

Stating this purpose more concretely, through an analytical survey of certain modern authors, I propose to do the following:

(1) To examine, in broad scope, the ideas of selected theological writers who have made significant contributions to the development

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1. cf. George Newlands, Theology of The Love of God, op.cit. pp. 97 ff. Newlands writes: "Pluralism in theology has come to stay." He argues, rightly I think, that the era of a "privileged starting point", resulting in an "exclusive theology", has passed.

of a theological concept of love.

(2) To trace, within and through the limited and somewhat arbitrary selection of authors, some of the recurrent theoretical characteristics which, in various forms, have tended to interpret love since the beginnings of western civilization.

(3) To note particularly those characteristics of Christian love which have shaped and informed modern Christian theology.

(4) To identify apparent contradictions in modern interpretations of Christian love, and, where possible, to offer suggestions for syntheses.

(5) To offer constructive critical suggestions, where appropriate, for the future development of the idea of love in Christian theology, based upon the central criterion that theories of love must be related intimately to justice, and help to promote just relationships between human beings.

(6) To contribute, through the widest possible exposition, to an increasing practical understanding of the "breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ...though it is beyond knowledge" (Eph. 3:18-19).

There is no possibility of outlining or characterizing the history of the idea of love, or even of the history of the Christian idea of love in recent times, in one comprehensive volume. However, as the chapter titles may intimate, I have attempted to select representative authors who, individually or in identifiable groups, may illustrate specific stages in the development of approaches to the conceptual grasp of the idea of love in Christian theology. Chapter One is concerned with the identification of love as a common 'feeling' in human experience. Chapter Two represents an attempt to reconcile, and when necessary, discriminate between, human passions and the perennial intuition that the experience of love entails some kind of eternal quality. Chapter Three describes the vacillating attempts to define this eternal quality in love, to set it apart, as it were,

from the frustration of human experience and temporality. Chapter Four is representative of the somewhat tragic realization that human nature rarely achieves the conceptual possibilities inherent in the ideal of love, and the conviction that there must be in love itself some redemptive capacity which can 'justify' the human failure to 'measure up' to the ideal set by love. Chapter Five is an assessment of one contemporary corpus of literature whose contributors have recognized that love and human justice are indispensable to each other, and that speculation about love is likely to be inadequate if lacking in correlative 'practice' or labouring under the illusion that worship and piety, alone, can right the wrongs of human greed from which love has suffered. Chapter Six represents one single attempt, among others, to affirm the holistic energy and vitality of love, through and despite all the evil, frustration, and injustice which is flagrantly obvious in every successive society; which rises to facilitate greater goals and greater achievements in a transcendent unity with the whole of creation, and with a shared purpose inherent in the individual and social purposes of every organism in the universe.

Of course, there is much overlap in the various emphases. On the other hand, there is often an apparent exaggeration by one author which results from some apparent deficiency in another. But through some principle of complementarity, it may be possible to arrive at a conviction that all, despite their obvious disagreements, are nevertheless worthy speakers in praise of love. Without ignoring contradictions, there may be a purpose in the praise itself. Charging the participants (and the audience) at our 'symposium', we may hear the 'convener' of another imaginary colloquium held long ago:

> I must see that Love is not defrauded of the praise, which it is my province to exact from each of you. Pay the God his due, and then reason between yourselves if you will.[1]

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1. Plato, The Banquet (or The Symposium), in Plato, Five Dialogues, Everyman Edition, E.I. Percy Bysshe Shelley, (1840), J.M.Dent & Sons, London, 1910. p. 40 (194)

PART I

NINETEENTH CENTURY FOUNDATIONS FOR LOVE--TALK

CHAPTER ONE

THE FEELING OF LOVE...THE MATTER OF LOVING

The Anthropological Foundations of 'Divine Love' in Early Hegelian Epistemology and the Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach

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Topical Survey

N.B. In reference to Feuerbach, I have depended primarily upon Feuerbach's Sämmtliche Werke, the collection edited himself and published in co-operation with Otto Wigand, Leipzig, 1846-1866, and upon the English Translation of the 2nd edition of Das Wesen des Christentums by Marian Edwards (George Eliot), published as The Essence of Christianity with an introduction by Karl Barth, by Harper, New York, 1957. Other works and editions will be cited as appropriate.

CHAPTER ONE

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Any thinker who has the temerity to announce that "Love is God" would deserve to attract the attention of psychological or theological research into the nature of love. If that thinker also sustains a place as a catalyst in thoughts of others, so that without him many of our assumptions about the world might well be different, a happily ignorant dismissal of his work could be a perilous oversight. The publisher's preface to the 1957 re-edition of Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity lists, as "those who have felt his impact", Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Troeltsch, Scheler, Freud, Berdyaev, Heidegger, Sartre, Buber, and Fromm.[1] An introductory essay by Barth and a foreword by Richard Niebuhr broaden the picture. Recent studies of Feuerbach's influence upon Marx and Engels have been more observant of the significance of that influence than was, until recently, stylish for Marxist treatment.[2] Certain discussions of concepts of God, especially in relation to human existence, have kept Feuerbach, if not in the limelight, at least waiting in the wings of the contemporary theological theatre.[3] To my knowledge, however, there is no adequate exposition of Feuerbach's central and pervasive idea of love. Although such an exposition can hardly be attempted in one chapter, it may be possible to sketch some of the most germane allusions, and to show how these Feuerbachian concepts may be important for the future development of love-talk in modern Christian theology.

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1. cf. Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, Harper and Row, New York, Evanston, and London, 1957, trans. Marian Evans (George Eliot) of 2nd. Edition, Das Wesen des Christentums, (first published 1841).
2. cf. Marx Wartofsky, Feuerbach, Cambridge University Press, 1977; and Kostas Axelos, Alienation, Praxis, and Technē in the Thought of Karl Marx, University of Texas Press, 1976, Trans. Ronald Bruzina.
3. cf. Charles Hartshorne and William Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, University of Chicago Press, 1953, pp. 448 ff. also, Hans Küng, Does God Exist?, Collins, London, 1981.

1. Feuerbach's Era (1804-1872)

Feuerbach's thought can hardly be appreciated outwith an appreciation of his time and his contemporaries.[1] Although such an appreciation cannot delay us here, Feuerbach may be characterized as a student of Hegel who came to oppose his master; who sat at the feet of Schleiermacher but discovered more in the idea of feeling than Schleiermacher explicated; who was intensely influenced by Descartes, but refused to accept any dualism between mind and matter; who described the need and goals of revolution but refused to participate in it; who collaborated with the scientific materialists but remained, in his own terms, "a natural philosopher of the spirit". In many ways Feuerbach represents a historical enigma, halfway between Hegelian idealistic philosophy and the First International, a man with one foot in both epochs. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that without his contribution as a bridge builder, it would have been a long leap from Hegel to Marx.

(1) Revolutionary Ambivalence

Engels wrote that The Essence of Christianity broke the spell of Hegel's speculative system, that it resolved the philosophical opposites of mind and body, man and nature:

> With one blow it pulverised the contradiction, in that without circumlocutions it placed materialism on the throne again...The contradiction, shown to exist only in our imagination, was dissolved. One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of the book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians.[2]

With the publication of this work, Feuerbach was hailed as the (reluctant) guru of a group which came to be known as The Young Hegelians.[3] After publishing more works, one of which was banned

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1. c.f. inter alia, Wilhelm Bolin, Ludwig Feuerbach, sein Wirken und seine Zeitgenossen, Stuttgart, 1891; Adolph Kohut, Ludwig Feuerbach:Sein Leben und seine Werke, Leipzig, 1909; and below:
2. Frederick Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy. Martin Lawrence, London, Ed. C.P. Dutt. p. 28 (1885)
3. cf. David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, MacMillan, 1969, p. 30.

by the censors, Feuerbach was brought to Heidelberg from his country retreat to give a course of lectures on "The Essence of Religion". Revolution was in the air, and he was even proposed as a delegate to the revolutionary assembly:

> Noble Sir! You are one of those rare persons in whom the spirit of the new times began to dawn. You must not be absent from the structure which is supposed to be erected for the world, and particularly for the everlasting well being of our long-enslaved people.[1]

But the revolution of 1848 came and went. Feuerbach sustained throughout a critical pessimism, derived perhaps from his critique of Hegelian dialectic. "Time," he said, "and not the Hegelian dialectic, is the medium of uniting opposites, contradictions, in one and the same being."[2] The leap from monarchy to republic could not be achieved as easily as some of the Young Hegelians seemed to suppose. Feuerbach called the revolution "an illegitimate child of Christian faith": "The Republicans believed in the creation of a republic out of nothing."[3]

Feuerbach's reluctance to become involved with the revolution, his reclusiveness and his caution despite his firmly critical contribution, seems to have militated against his continued influence. Karl Barth described Feuerbach as a man who, in racing to catch a train, discovered that the train he was racing to catch was the wrong one. Yet his race for the wrong train made him too late to catch the oncoming train, which was the right one.[4] Barth's assessment may have overestimated Feuerbach as a racer, when all the time he may have been a close watcher of trains. Nevertheless, it was Karl Marx who happened to be at the station at the right time, ticket in hand: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world...the point is to change it."[5]

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1. Quoted by Frederick Gregory, Scientific Materialism in 19th C. Germany, Reidel, Boston, 1977. p. 26, Note p. 220
2. Feuerbach, Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 23
3. Feuerbach, Vorlesungen über das Wesen der Religion, Otto Wigand Verlag, Leipzig, 1851; Vol. VIII in Feuerbach's Sämmtliche Werke, p. vii, my trans.
4. Barth, intro. to Feuerbach, Essence of Christianity, p. xxvi op. cit.
5. Karl Marx,"Theses on Feuerbach", Thesis XI (Marx:Early Writings, Penguin 1975, p. 423)

(2) Scientific Materialism

Despite the eclipse of Feuerbach on the political horizon, his continued research into the relationship between body and mind, nature and spirit, the one and the many, matter and thought, and other similar polarities has earned Feuerbach the title "Father of German Materialism".[1] His inspiration of and relation to scientists such as Karl Vogt, Jacob Moleschott, Ludwig Buchner, and Heinrich Czolbe continues to be noted whenever such polarities are raised today. In his early years he had refused to accept a strict empiricism emptied of the 'spiritual' dynamics which constitute life. Although he gets no credit for a final solution to the problem of the duality between matter and consciousness, he is respected for having raised many of the questions. "To make empiricism express itself as philosophy, and make it work, is impossible."[2] Feuerbach retained enough of Hegel's influence to refuse to accept any sort of 'simple' materialism, such as that of Hobbes or Locke. An explanation of matter must be able to comprehend human thinking, feeling, and willing. Although, as Marx Wartofsky notes, Feuerbach is not able to show that matter is capable of consciousness, Feuerbach asserted that consciousness could not be dissolved into matter, yet was dependent upon it. Feuerbach's later work, The Mystery of Sacrifice or Man is What He Eats (Das Geheimnis des Opfers oder Der Mensch ist, was er isst) has been much quoted and little understood. It is grounded more upon theology than upon science, and can be connected, with little difficulty, to an early reference from Hegel.[3] The significance of Feuerbach's materialism cannot be divorced from his training in dialectical theology. In some sense, bread becomes thought.

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1. Gregory, Scientific Materialism in 19th C. Germany, op. cit. (Ch.1)
2. Marx Wartofsky, Feuerbach, op.cit. p.68 (from Feuerbach, History of Modern Philosophy (critique of Hobbes))
3. Hegel, Early Theological Writings, "The Spirit of Christianity", (1798?) University of Chicago Press, 1948, Trans. T.M. Knox, p. 249; Feuerbach's Werke, Band 10. Otto Wigand Verlag, Leipzig, 1866 (No English translation.) Das Geheimnis des Opfers oder der Mensch ist, was er isst.

The problem is to explain the transaction.

Feuerbach's reclusive life of study in the country was punctuated more by long walks in the forest than by the confrontation of immediate debate. His reflections were an interpolation of his studies of Luther, Hegel, and Schleiermacher (among others) with the experience of married life and pastoral observation. He was no scientist, but he acknowledged the critique of scientific method applied to human existence. When he came to speak about love, about feeling, about the prospects for human practice, he used language and concepts which applied phenomenological analysis to human possibilities. Reason could no longer be for him an activity of ungrounded speculation, but could only be, authentically, an "instrument of feeling" challenged at every turn by the realities of nature. This connection did not go unnoticed by the scientific materialists. The human constituted for him a "species", different from other species because the human species is (or can become) conscious of itself as not only a mere individual, but also as a "species being" with all the rights and responsibilities related to it.

> The scientific materialists found their moral standard in the new morality of Ludwig Feuerbach. They were attracted to Feuerbach because he had called for facts. As men who identified with the natural sciences they appreciated that emphasis. They were also attracted to Feuerbach's new religion. Not only did it expose the falsehoods on which traditional religion was based, but it provided a way of preserving the ideals and moral values they had never intended to throw away.[1]

Frederick Gregory's summary of Feuerbach's relation to the scientific materialists raises questions about Feuerbach which serve to further illustrate the enigma he has been for modern analysts. It is doubtful that Feuerbach really falls in line with modern scientific materialism to the extent that Gregory assumes. At bottom,

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1. Gregory, Scientific Materialism in Nineteenth Century Germany, op. cit. p. 213.

his thoughts appear to be more related to his theological foundations than to his materialist emphases. If the 19th century materialists saw in his writings a "new morality", one wonders whether they were sufficiently critical of their own bourgeois mentalities to be able to interpret him correctly. It is doubtful too that Feuerbach can be associated with some "new religion" ("My philosophy is no philosophy, my religion is no religion."). The preservation of "the moral values which they had never intended to throw away" may be exactly the sort of ideological conservatism which Feuerbach criticized as the barrier to a successful revolution and a just social order. Nevertheless, Gregory's concluding eulogy may stand, without too much examination, as a tribute to a thinker whose thought has yet to be deciphered, but has certainly had a pervasive effect.[1]

2. Summary Overview of Feuerbach's Thought

A study of Feuerbach's philosophical development, says Marx Wartofsky, is a veritable course in dialectical thinking.[2] Feuerbach's aphorisms and self-contradictions have rendered him an impossible subject for categorization. Not only the inherent dialectic in his movement from idealism to "anthropologism", but also the recurrent irony and tactical reductionism throughout his works, leave little prospect for definitive interpretation. Yet some grasp of the overall character of his thought is crucial if we are to attempt to isolate what he says about any particular subject (or predicate!). Thus, before going on to what Feuerbach says about love, I will try to establish the most critical aspects in his thinking, covering the span of nearly half a century, insofar as such aspects are likely to relate to the idea of love.

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1. Cf. Bolin, Ludwig Feuerbach, op. cit, p. 1. Shortly before his death Feuerbach was considering writing a "key" to his life and works, "um den Leuten die Augen zu öffnen. Denn das Gebiet, das ich eigentlich schon seit dreissig Jahren bearbeite, ist ihnen noch immer eine terra incognita." Feuerbach's ambiguity is probably not unintentional.
2. Wartofsky, Feuerbach, op. cit. p.7

(1) Feuerbach's Model of Consciousness Development

How a person comes to know anything, and specifically how he comes to know about himself, was a continuous question for Feuerbach. He developed his epistemology from exhaustive critiques of Descartes, Leibniz, Hobbes, Bacon, Boehme, Hegel, and others. He differs from Descartes in that he refused to accept any dualism between mind and body. He differs from Hegel in refusing to accept any idea of absolute being, or idea of being. He insisted on beginning with "being itself" (human being, or Dasein). Feuerbach accepted no abstract mediation in self-consciousness dialectic. The 'other' must be a real other, a 'Thou', not imaginary. Information about the self is derived from identification of similar qualities in another of like species. The information is primarily interpreted through the senses and a developing 'feeling' (Sinnlichkeit). Reason is dependent upon sense and feeling, which are dependent upon matter. Hence there can be no ultimate separation between mind and matter. The interdependence of I and Thou constitutes an unfolding self-consciousness, which is at the same time a "species-consciousness". Consciousness of self as member of a species is entailed in the highest human feeling, love.

(2) Religion as "An Unself-conscious Self-consciousness"

The essence of the religious spirit is not thinking, or reason, but rather feeling and belief. Feuerbach makes great use of Luther: "My belief is my being." Belief is primal activity, the work of the imagination, upon which any 'practice' is dependent. Belief is of a different quality than reason, for it is grounded initially on images acquired through sense and feeling. "The image is the thing of religion." Imagination fills in the spaces of unrevealed data when an 'I' (subject) meets an inexplicable 'thou' (object). Hence the qualities of the subject are attributed to any encountered object which is alien or not fully understood. For example, the unpredictability of nature may be attributed to human caprice,

characterized as 'divine'. Although such anthropomorphic description is a necessary function of the imagination, constituting (tentative) belief, it is wrong "to give reason to belief". The result leads to abstract theology which is remote from concrete data, hypostases which are no longer accountable to history. Speculative philosophy falls into the same trap whenever absolutes are identified which are not subject to actual phenomena. Religion is, for Feuerbach, the unconscious attempt to gain species-knowledge by projecting human qualities onto non-human objects, characterized as divine. Although the human being is mistaken about the object he takes as a 'thou', he is not mistaken about the qualities he attributes to the object. In the characterization the imagination contributes to the development of human self-consciousness. The qualities attributed to his gods are the qualities of the human being (at any given epoch).

(3) Inversion of Subject and Predicate

Since feeling is prior to reason, and since religious images are the objectifications of feeling, one cannot apply reason directly to analysis of religious objects. The truth in religious statements lies not in the objects they purport to describe, but in the description of the objects. The descriptive predicate may therefore be taken as substantive. Religious statements cannot yield verifiable information about the images of religion, but they can yield verifiable (or at least highly correlative) information about the nature of humanity. Hence theology is converted to "anthropology". Philosophy grounded on an abstract absolute beyond influence of an existent thinking, feeling, willing being (Dasein) is "nothing but" another form of theology. But empirical philosophy is also inadequate if it cannot comprehend human Sinnlichkeit in all modes (including love), "The senses serve not merely as sources of inference, but as bearers of the existence of things beyond them."[1]

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1. Wartofsky, Feuerbach, op. cit. p. 67

By implication, Feuerbach argues that human experience and the dynamics of human existence only can inform "the philosophy of the future". The unconscious self-unfolding of the human in all of the images of religion must be taken into account if philosophy is to understand humanity. Either a speculative imitation of theology or an empiricist debasement of human experience constitutes an inadequate and misguided field for rational analysis. By "anthropology" Feuerbach means a human phenomenology which takes into full account the physical and the spiritual attributes of human being. The latter are those qualities which are attributed to God in religion, but which really belong to the 'divine' character of human nature.

(4) Love: the "Essence" of Christianity

Christianity represents the apex of the unconscious human drive to self-knowledge. Through the development of feeling in encounters with real human 'thous' (reflexive objects), the imagination in belief unconsciously solves the problem of the particular in relation to the universal. The central image is the incarnation of God as human, as a feeling, thinking, willing, and also suffering and loving being. Christ is therefore the deepest expression of human self-consciousness, and of the essential human nature of Sinnlichkeit (feeling). Feeling becomes love as it identifies itself in a real thou, and yearns for community. Love is revealed in the Incarnation as the highest human value, and as such is 'divine'. But the human does not realize that he has made love into God and retreats to various forms of primitive religion. Faith, in dogmatic form, displaces natural flexible belief. Thus faith militates against love. Therefore, says Feuerbach, if we for the sake of love do not sacrifice God, then the authentic revelation of the Christian religion is sacrificed, leaving only a faith in which "the devils participate". Moral life must be grounded upon the natural, revealed, conscious, self-identification of the human as a species-being, who takes a conscious, real thou as his object for self-knowledge.

Religion, after all, is an illusion. The "essence" of Christianity is human nature; but the greatest manifestation of that nature is the human capacity to love.

3. Feuerbach's Early Love-Interest

(1) The Dissertation

The germ of much of Feuerbach's later thought is already present in his 1828 doctoral dissertation. In it he had tried to argue, in Hegelian fashion, that reason constitutes the unifying principle in human being.[1] But many of the themes which are in this work attributed to the activity of mind are later attributed to feeling. The relation of the individual to the species, for example, is first conceived as activity of thought as a subject takes himself as an imaginary object. Sense perception is locked within the boundaries of the 'I', so that one may only imagine what the 'thou' experiences. Feeling, he thought in his dissertation, could not be shared, yet must be thought about in order for feelings to be differentiated.[2] As thoughts about one's own feelings are shared in language, reason serves to break the dichotomy between the I and the thou.[3] "In thinking, the other is in myself. I am at the same time I and thou - not any determinate particular thou, however, but thou in general, as a species".[4] For our purpose it is not necessary to trace Feuerbach's argument in order to see that the categories he attempted to attribute to reason in his doctoral dissertation might be resolved better with the development of a comprehensive idea of love. He noted that the human has "an insatiable desire to unite with others from whom he is divided by nature."[5] What Feuerbach was striving for was a concept of eros conceived as the process of humanization in all its (platonic) forms.

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1. De Ratione una, universali, infinita, published in German as Ueber die Einheit, Allgemeinheit und Unendlichkeit der Vernunft as Vol.IV of Feuerbach's Sämmelte Werke, Bolin and Jodl editors, 1903-1910
2. Feuerbach, Ueber die Einheit...ibid, p. 302, trans. Wartofsky, op. cit. p.31
3. ibid, p. 304, trans. Wartofsky, op. cit. p. 32
4. Feuerbach, Ueber die Einheit...Bolin-Jodl IV, p. 305, op. cit, trans. Wartofsky,op.cit.p.35
5. ibid. p. 342, trans. Wartofsky, op. cit. p.44

> ...the individual, in the strict sense of the word is only a fiction; and whoever wants to look for a human being in himself, i.e. one who is still untouched and untainted by society, must look for one who was neither born, nor raised, but must have been created from nothing. For the poor human being is already tainted by his fellow men, even in his mother's womb.[1]

> There must therefore be some way in the depths of man in which the yearning for the thou can be fulfilled: where the I and the thou are no longer counterposed, where this unity is not only a virtual one, not only a mere connection, but is absolute, unconditional, fully realized.[2]

Any reader of Plato (and such was Feuerbach) would recognize that this agenda demands a greater contribution from the intellect than logical deduction. Already Feuerbach seemed to be aware, even as he hypothesized about the unifying capacity of reason, that universal reason could not ultimately solve his problems. Intuition, perhaps, was already at work.

Feuerbach's public break with the Hegelian philosophy (if it occurred at all) was not obvious until his publication of Zur Critique der Hegelschen Philosophie in 1839. But between 1833 and 1839 a series of philosophical critiques helped to crystallize his conviction that an empirical philosophy which could not understand feeling and thinking was not good enough, nor was idealistic philosophy adequate which posited reason above and beyond human experience and human existence.

In 1840 Feuerbach came to criticize his own thesis, saying that, despite the unifying tendency in reason, it could not, by itself, function as a philosophical principle of unity.

> What is missing in my dissertation and what is characteristically missing in the whole approach of Absolute philosophy is that this continuity, this unbroken unity holds not only for thought, but also for sensation, for life in general. The point is missed that the other thinks in my stead only because he also senses in my stead. For just as there is no sensation for man without thought, without consciousness, the converse is also true: There is no consciousness without sensation. For what is consciousness but the conscious or sensed sensation?[3]

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1. ibid
2. ibid, p. 344, trans. Wartofsky, op. cit. p. 45
3. Feuerbach, Ueber die Einheit...Bolin,Jodl IV, p.421, op.cit. Trans. Wartofsky,op.cit.p.47

As this quotation stands, it does not seem to be Feuerbach's final position. Here he states that there is no sensation without consciousness. After The Essence of Christianity, one may argue that feeling is initially unconscious, only gaining consciousness through projections of the imagination. However, the difference between empirical sensation and the effect of that sensation upon subjective feeling is a thorny question in Feuerbach's writings, and one which is beyond the scope of this enquiry. What we may note is Feuerbach's gradual elevation of the concept of Sinnlichkeit, entailing both empirical and subjective stimuli, and which cannot be subjected to the activity of thought and reason, much less to the self-activity of matter alone.

(2) The Diary

Feuerbach kept a Tagebuch which discloses that during the years of his philosophical critiques he was already developing his own views which were to appear in his later writings. Between 1834 and 1836 several entries disclose his early exploration into the concept of love. "What is love?", he asked himself. His first answer to the question is "the unity between thought and being".[1] Being is the "wife" and thought is the "man". But just as there are good marriages and bad ones, there is a "bad" love (egoism) and a "good" love (love for others). At first it seems that only the latter is authentic, worthy to be called love. While love is for the "old" philosophers an illegitimate child, offspring of the "concubine of nature", love is the legitimate daughter of "modern" (i.e. Hegelian and speculative) philosophy. She is received into the "community of the spirit" as the "living compendium" of moral philosophy. As the tree rots which cannot express itself in leaves,

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1. Extracts from this diary are found in Adolph Kohut, Ludwig Feuerbach, op. cit. pp. 434-436. Kohut may have had access to the whole diary, found among Feuerbach's papers, explaining certain differences in extracts published by Feuerbach himself, in Werke, Band 2, 1846.

bloom, and fruit, love "suffocates in its own blood" if it is not allowed to express itself.[1]

> You should believe, yes believe, but believe that there is a true love among human beings. Also believe that the human heart is capable of an infinite, all-forgiving love, and that human love can have the characteristics of divine love...Love, but authentically, and you inherit all the virtues belonging to yourself.[2]

The above extract demonstrates the already visible conviction that human love is somehow divine.

In a similar reflection the diary gives an early glimpse of Feuerbach's later insistence that the source of human love is largely to be found in the common experience of suffering:

> Is it not a terrible weakness to feel the sensuous loss of a loved one most painfully? No, it is a weakness to refuse to feel the source of love, the sorrows of life. Therefore I am not ashamed to have felt both the torments and the longing of love. Yet I believe myself to be in essence a philosopher, for a philosopher must not only know things, but he must, above all, experience them.[3]

Here, too, is insight into Feuerbach's conviction that the identity of a subject is to be found in the descriptive predicate.

The following aphorism also gives a clue to the epistemological nature of self-identification through love of others:

> The love of others tells you what you are. The lover alone has the true essence of the beloved before his eyes and in his hands. In order to know a person, one must love him.[4]

Further to be found in Feuerbach's diary is the seminal concept of love as an elan vital, a life force, an eros:

> No existent being (Wesen) is destined for happiness. But whatever lives, as long as it lives, is destined for life. The life of life, however, is love.[5]

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1. Kohut, Ludwig Feuerbach, op. cit. p. 434 (My translation). Also, Ludwig Feuerbach, Feuerbach's Werke, edited by himself and published by Otto Wigand Verlag, Leipzig, 1846-1866, Band 2, 1846, Fragmente zur Characteristik meines philosophischen curriculum vitae, p. 391 ff.
2. Kohut, ibid, p. 435; Werke, Band 2 (ibid) p. 395 (My translation.)
3. Kohut, ibid, p. 435; Werke, ibid, p. 396 (I am indebted to Prof. D.W.D. Shaw for assistance in translating this particular extract.)
4. Kohut, ibid, p. 435; Werke, ibid, p. 393
5. Kohut, Ludwig Feuerbach, op. cit. p. 435; Feuerbach, Werke, Band 2, p. 394.

Another extract sets out the relation between faith and love in Feuerbach's undeveloped thought. Here he sees faith as an activity of an individual alone, while love is the activity of a member of a community:

> You can believe without setting down a confession of your faith, for you have the belief only for yourself. But you cannot love unless you confess, express, and actualize your love; for you do not have your love only for yourself, but for others.[1]

A major point in Feuerbach's critique of religion, later developed in no less than four works, is present in his Diary of the mid-thirties:

> It is better to embrace the emptiest, most unworthy object with love, that to lock oneself, loveless, within one's self. But only the object of true love both develops and reveals at once the true essence of humanity.[2]

The idea of immortality interested Feuerbach throughout his career. His first book was Thoughts on Death and Immortality (1830). Published in 1866 was Divinity, Freedom, and Immortality, the last volume in his Werke. (Both titles, but neither of the books, are English translations.) A characteristically ambiguous entry in his diary demonstrates his realistic, yet somewhat transcendent, approach to the problem:

> Is it not improper to feel a longing to see a deceased loved one again, who would be so inhuman? But is it a proof for the reality of the beyond? Is it not the expression of a love which is already satisfied and content here, therefore an indirect witness that our all is here? ..."I love you eternally" means that my love for you ends only with my consciousness.
>
> That is eternal whose end is my own end...Love alone solves the riddle of immortality for you.[3]

Although Feuerbach has probably not solved the "riddle of immortality", there is a sense in which he leaves the question open. Later entries in Feuerbach's diary, between 1841 and 1845, serve to illustrate

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1. Kohut, ibid; Feuerbach, Werke, ibid.
2. Kohut, ibid
3. Kohut, ibid; Feuerbach, Werke, Band 2, pp. 394-395

the dialectical progression which characterizes his thinking. As he himself was aware, his thinking seemed always to be in flux. Neither Christ nor love could be as easily explained as he had thought in his early writings.

> What good can come out of Nazareth?"...Only the good, the novel, always comes directly to the place where it is not expected, and it is always other than it is expected to be.[1]

The dialectical method which typified his approach to philosophy was also applied to his study of Luther, and indeed, of the New Testament itself. The following two extracts anticipate questions which were to receive considerable attention in the twentieth century:

> "You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. That is the first commandment. And the other is equal to it: You should love your neighbour as yourself." But how then can the second commandment be equal to the first, if this one already lays claim to all my mind and all my strength? What remains left for human beings from my heart, when I should love God with my whole heart?[2]

> Whoever does not love his brother whom he sees, how can he love God, whom he does not see?" So says the Bible. But I ask, "whoever loves his brother whom he sees, how can he love God, whom he does not see?" How can love for a sensuous, "finite" being, and love for an impassive, "infinite" being, share the same place in one and the same heart?[3]

In a progression from his early thoughts about love, properly conceived as only the opposite of the "bad" egoism (cf. above p.12), Feuerbach began to develop a notion of appropriate self-love, contingent upon any wider concept of love as a life-force, or eros.

> Your first duty is to make yourself happy. If you are happy, you make others happy. The happy person can only see happiness around him[4]

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1. Feuerbach, Werke, Band 2, op. cit. p. 407 (My trans.)
2. ibid. p. 406
3. ibid; Two major questions are involved in these "exegeses". The first is that of appropriate Christian piety, treated, among others by Karl Barth, Anders Nygren, and Emil Brunner. The second is the logical argument which has been considered by Charles Hartshorne, in The Logic of Perfection, Open Court Publishing Co., La Salle, Illinois, 1962, p. 40 f.
4. Feuerbach, Werke, Band 2, p. 413

> If you simply condemn egoism, that is, self-love, then you must also condemn, consequently, the love for others. Love is good will and good behaviour toward others, therefore, to recognize the just self-love of another. Why then will you deny for yourself what you acknowledge in others?[1]

The diary demonstrates the many dimensions of Feuerbach's idea of love. Religion is an illusion, but it holds concrete knowledge about the nature of human beings. Love unifies being and thought, but love for self turns out to be a crucial aspect of a love for neighbour, which can disclose what human being is about. Belief is a necessary, if somewhat irrational, activity of rational being; without believing that love is possible, one does not love. Experience of the depths of human feeling is necessary for the philosopher to authentically philosophize. Love is essentially irrational, yet it is a key to rational knowledge, as through love for others knowledge about oneself is disclosed. Love is "the life of life" and thereby intimately related to the common human experience of suffering; yet each existent being is urged toward its own happiness, upon which the happiness of others may depend. The intensity of love in this world indicates that human existence is fulfilled in this world; yet there is a transcendence of consciousness and of love which appeals beyond this world. Christ is the manifestation of human images, but appears to disclose in some concrete way the idea of a feeling, suffering, loving God. Yet such a God is inconsistent with the 'impassive' and 'infinite' being who demands the whole of human love.

Almost every extract from Feuerbach's diary is a two-sided, dialectical observation. Although Feuerbach himself came to doubt the universality of dialectic, especially when applied to history, the above reflections imply the inherent dialectic in his method. The diary shows the depth of Feuerbach's conviction that love is the highest attribute of human being. Not evident, yet, is the

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1. Feuerbach, Werke, Band 2, op. cit. p. 413

role that the imagination plays in the synthesis of polarities with which love in its complexity is involved. But Feuerbach, if still a "Hegelian" in 1836, is already well on his way to a dialectical opposition, or perhaps a continuation, of Hegel's ideas. The next step in our enquiry is to examine, briefly, what Hegel had to say.

4. Early Hegel and Later Feuerbach

(1) Theory of the Young Hegel's Influence on Feuerbach

Hegel died in 1831. In the years immediately after his death some of his friends and students began to collate his lectures, unpublished manuscripts, and memorabilia. The resulting compilation of works gave rise to a Hegelian 'school' which divided into left, right, and centre interpretations.[1] But the collected works were edited in such a way that some of the early manuscripts of Hegel were omitted. Copies of these early manuscripts, or at least much of their content, were circulated among certain of Hegel's students and followers who noted a distinct difference in the political and religious implications of these early writings, from the speculative, synthesizing system of Hegel's later published works. That group which considered Hegel's early manuscripts to be of great importance was known as "the Young Hegelians", and their name may well be directly associated with the 'young Hegel', who wrote before 1800.[2] For some very good reasons, Feuerbach was hailed as their spokesman.

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1. David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, op. cit. pp. 1-4
2. Hegel first began to develop his "system" in 1801. His Early Theological Writings were not published in German until edited by Nohl in 1907, not in English until T.M. Knox's translation in 1948. My interpretation is not supported by McLellan (or anyone else that I know of). I assume that the Early Writings were suppressed (1) because they were not part of Hegel's final "system"; (2) because they gave support to a radical interpretation of Hegel, which would have perhaps led to government censure; (3) because they disagreed, at any rate, with the theology of Hegel's editors. McLellan offers no explanation for the name "Young Hegelians". So far as I know, Feuerbach has never before been associated with the writings of "Young Hegel", certainly not to the extent that I suggest. This section assumes that Feuerbach had before him either the manuscripts, or the content, of Hegel's Early Theological Writings. cf. Herman Nohl, Hegels theologische Jugendschriften, Tübingen, 1907; T.M. Knox (trans.) Hegel: Early Theological Writings, University of Chicago Press, 1948; Pennsylvania Paperback, University of Pennsylvania Press Philadelphia, 1971

Feuerbach asserted (before Marx) that Hegel, found to be standing on his head, must be turned right side up.[1] This suggestion may well be a reference to Hegel's development, who in his early years began his philosophy with a critique of Christianity, based upon imagination and the progress (not dialectic) of human feeling in religion. But Hegel began to subordinate the development of basic human needs to a comprehensive idea of reason. In late 1800 Hegel wrote to Schelling:

> In my scientific development which began with the more subordinate needs of man, I was compelled to proceed toward science (philosophy), and at the same time the ideal of my youth had to be transformed into the form of reflection, into a system.[2]

This letter, in Feuerbach's view, would be the beginning of Hegel's self-inversion. "The ideal of my youth", in Hegel's words, appears to be none other that the concept of love expressed through Christianity. Hegel's essay, written in 1798-1799, entitled (by Nohl?) "The Spirit of Christianity" traces the idea of love through the life of Christ and its abortive, tragic eclipse in the early Church. "The Positivity of the Christian Religion", written in 1795-6, shows how the progress of human feeling develops through religion, how paganism is conquered by Christianity, only to be objectified again in dogmatic beliefs.

There is little chance that Feuerbach can have been ignorant of these writings. Many of Hegel's early themes are developed by Feuerbach: for example, the work of the imagination in miracles, the objectification of human and natural material in the sacraments, the opposition between faith and love, the self-identification of human nature in the act of loving. Feuerbach, in his books Das Wesen des Christentums, Das Wesen der Religion, Das Geheimnis des Opfers oder der Mensch ist, was er isst, appears to be saying that

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1. Louis Althusser, For Marx, p. 46 E.T. Ben Brewster, Allen Lane, London, 1969. Althusser admirably documents the direct adaptations of Feuerbach's aphorisms by Marx. Included are references to Hegel standing on his head, the opium of the people, the transformation of religion into anthropology.
2. Quoted in T.M. Knox, Hegel: Early Theological Writings, p. 19

Hegel was on the right track in his youth. The correct continuation of philosophy, therefore, is the projection of the implicit anthropological critique of religion, begun by Hegel, but 'forsaken' in Hegel's system.

T.M. Knox offers a characterization of Hegel's early period, in which he tried to posit Christian love as "the ultimate goal of life and thought", but found the project to be self-defeating.

> Most of Hegel's early writings, permeated with the spirit of Storm and Stress, offer an interpretation of the Gospel and Christian dogma culminating in the idea of Love. Love overcomes all differentiations of life and thought and restores the original unity of all men. Love is wiser than understanding and reflection. The soul that loves reaches God. Hegel also reflected on the function of spirit - a power that conquers the citadel of division by unifying the most tenacious of oppositions, the opposition between objectivity and subjectivity. Christianity arose as the religion of spirit. But it was the fate of Christianity to call back an already defeated enemy. Spirit submits to the necessity of becoming objective itself as creed and dogma, or as codified faith in preference to the love that binds the community together. The conclusion of the essay on "The Spirit of Christianity" is therefore gloomy and destructive. The intent of Jesus cannot be maintained in his community. Neither love nor even spirit can bring about absolute reconciliation - the ultimate goal of life and thought.[1]

Even as Hegel found Christianity to be foundered on the rocks of dogmatic objectification (the basis for Feuerbach's faith-love antithesis) he still tried to formulate a systematic philosophy based upon the encompassing idea of love, which, he briefly thought, might rise above the frustrations of its historical manifestation. The "Fragment of a System" demonstrates this phase in Hegel's thought.[2] Love, he suggested, is greater than intellect simply because it is essentially an aesthetically orientated representation of truth. Hence it is not capable of adequate intellectual representation, and cannot be construed by conceptual methods. The intellect cannot contain, or even fully understand, the vitality and immediacy of

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1. T.M. Knox, Hegel: Early Theological Writings, op. cit. Introduction, p. 16
2. ibid; "Fragment of a System", p. 309 ff.

life. Thus not the intellect, but only finite organic life alone can rise to infinite life.[1]

An adequate comparison of Hegel's early writings with Feuerbach's later works would demand more space than is here allowed. For our purpose, a brief outline of Hegel's early themes must suffice to show that Feuerbach was at least aware of them by the time he wrote The Essence of Christianity.[2]

(2) Love: The "Spirit" of Christianity

Hegel demonstrates how human feeling is objectified in religion, even as religion slowly discloses the universality of that feeling. Thus, paganism with its capricious gods is superseded by a 'dependable' humanized God. This supersession is first visible in Judaism; but then the authentic feeling is made objective again. What Hegel says of Judaism is later construed by Feuerbach to apply to Christianity.

> In the spirit of the Jews...there stood an alien court of judgment. When then, they were referred to love as a bond in man between sin and reconciliation, their loveless nature must have been shocked, and, when their hatred took the form of a judgment, the thought of such a bond must to their minds have been the thought of a lunatic. For they had committed all harmony among men, all love, spirit, and life, to an alien object; they had alienated from themselves all the genii in which men are united; they had put nature in the hands of an alien being.[3]

Here Hegel is trying to characterize what Jesus was combatting in opposing love to objectified morality. The "spirit" of Christianity is integrated with nature, has no feeling of alienation. "Boldness and confidence of decision about fulness of life, about abundance of love, arise from the feeling of the man who bears in himself the whole of human nature... Hence the unhesitating, confident, words of Jesus: Thy sins are forgiven thee."[4] But the alienation

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1. ibid, p.313; cf. Knox, Introduction, p.317; Feuerbach's project to "posit the infinite in the finite", i.e. to characterize the "divinity" of human love, appears to be strongly dependent upon this aborted concern of Hegel's.
2. The evidence seems to suggest that Feuerbach first became aware of Hegel's early posiition in 1838 or 1839. This is when Feuerbach's Critique of Hegel changed from a positive, Hegelian critique, to a negative, anti-Hegelian critique. What Feuerbach seemed to be doing was using early Hegel to assist his criticism of the Hegelian system.
3. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity", (trans. Knox) op. cit. p. 240
4. ibid.

was not actually overcome by Jesus, for his disciples were still subject to "the spirit of Judaism". Since love is so instinctively integrated, it is constantly opposed by objective necessity and contingency.[1]

> The spirit of the Christian communion likewise saw mundane realities in every relationship of self-developing and self-revealing life. But since this spirit was the feeling of love, its greatest enemy was objectivity, and the result was that it remained as poor as the Jewish spirit, though it disdained the riches for the sake of which the Jewish spirit served.[2]

Hegel says that a universal love was indeed revealed in Christianity, i.e. in the early Church, but it was not recognized as such. It became, after the leave-taking of Jesus, the apparent bond of mutual love. Inclusive love became identified with exclusive love.

A rather difficult, yet revealing passage of Hegel's gives us insight into Feuerbach's assertion that Christianity has no species-consciousness, precisely because the mutual love of a community is opposed to cosmic inclusiveness.

> By love's extension over a whole community its character changes; it ceases to be a living union of individualities and instead its enjoyment is restricted to the consciousness of their mutual love...
>
> This love is a divine spirit, but it still falls short of religion. To become religion, it must manifest itself in an objective form. A feeling, something subjective, it must be fused with the universal, with something represented in idea, and thereby acquire the form of a being to whom prayer is both possible and due. The need to unite subject with object, to unite feeling, and feeling's demand for objects, with the intellect, to unite them in something beautiful, in a god, by means of fancy, is the supreme need of the human spirit and the urge to religion. This urge of the Christian community its belief in God could not satisfy because in their God there could have been no more than their common feeling. In the God of the world <u>all</u> beings are united; in him there are no members, as members, of a community. The harmony of such members is not the harmony of the whole; otherwise they would not form a particular community, would not be linked together by love. The Godhead of the <u>world</u> is not the manifestation of <u>their</u> love, of <u>their</u> divinity.[3]

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1. Knox translated another fragment of a MS, by Hegel, which is entitled "Love", from 1797 or 1798. Feuerbach may or may not have known about it. cf. Knox op. cit. pp. 302-308
2. Hegel: "The Spirit of Christianity" (trans. Knox) op. cit. p.288
3. ibid, p. 289

Hegel is not judging, in the above extract, the authenticity of mutual love; what he is judging is the objectification of mutual love as religion, which effectually short-changes cosmic, inclusive love. (For Feuerbach's adaptation of this idea, cf. The Essence of Christianity, Chapter XXVI, "The Contradiction of Faith and Love".)[1]

(3) The Nature of Religion as Human Nature

In the above critique, Hegel was attempting to develop a concept of religion which would overcome the fallacies of Christianity (in its practical form), a concept of religion which would not be limited to the objectification of mutual love at best. Religion, properly conceived, must be the unalienated, inclusive projection of love as the unification of unity and non-unity. The early Hegel's love was neither subject nor object, but the potential unification of both. For Feuerbach, love was to be the principle of unity, the highest form of feeling, the most divine attribute of the human. The difference between Hegel's and Feuerbach's conception of the 'positive' nature of religion is nil. Both identified the 'need', for religion, the constructive work of the imagination in fulfilling the need, and the latent self-disclosure of human "spirit" or "essence" (respectively for Hegel and Feuerbach) in and through religion. The difference lies in the final interpretation of religion. For Hegel, religion must become systematic philosophy; for Feuerbach, it must become anthropology.

In a preface to an essay written shortly before "The Spirit of Christianity", called "Positivity of Christian Religion", Hegel wrote

> A positive religion is contrasted with natural religion, and this presupposes that there is only one natural religion, since human nature is one and single, while there may be many positive religions. It is clear from this very contrast that a positive religion is a contranatural one or a supernatural one, containing concepts and information transcending understanding and reason and requiring feelings and actions which would not come naturally to men; the feelings are forcibly and mechanically stimulated, the actions are done to order or from obedience without any spontaneous interest.

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. p. 247 ff.

> It is obvious from this general explanation that before a religion or any part of it can be set down as positive, the concept of human nature, and therefore man's relation to God, must first be defined[1]

It is apparent, only from a quick reference to the table of contents of Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity, that Feuerbach took Hegel's early programme as his own. The 'positivity' of the Christian religion indeed proceeds from Feuerbach's analysis of human nature inherent within Christianity.

Feuerbach undoubtedly took the programme further than Hegel, ending by 'negating' Hegel's own solution: speculative philosophy is another way of doing theology. Feuerbach's method, however, for the critique of human nature as it is revealed in religion, was originally Hegel's idea:

> The general concept of human nature admits of infinite modifications; and there is no need of the makeshift of calling experience to witness that modifications are necessary and that human nature has never been present in its purity. A strict proof of this is possible; all that is necessary is to settle the question: "What is human nature in its purity?" This expression, "human nature in its purity" should imply no more than accordance with the general concept. But the living nature of man is always other than the concept of the same, and hence what for the concept is a bare modification, a pure accident, a superfluity, becomes a necessity, something living, perhaps the only thing which is natural and beautiful.
>
> Now this gives quite a different appearance to the criterion for the positivity of religion...[2]

In "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" we have an early glimpse of Hegel as an "anthropologist", beginning to observe the phenomena hidden in faith which may disclose the nature of human being. Only later was the "anthropology" removed to be encompassed by a still greater criterion for the nature of humankind: not man as actor, thinker, and lover alone, but man as the embodiment of the greatest acting, thinking and loving possible - der Geist. "Human nature in its purity" was considered within the realm of

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1. Hegel, "Positivity of Christian Religion", trans. Knox, op. cit. p. 167. (1795) This essay was indeed published during Feuerbach's life, but after The Essence of Christianity had first appeared. Rosenkranz, Hegel's Leben Berlin, 1844, pp. 510 ff. Still there is no reason to assume that the essay had not been circulated privately among Hegel's students.
2. Hegel, "The Positivity of the Christian Religion". (trans. Knox) op. cit. p. 169

a different kingdom, leaving for Feuerbach the human nature with which Hegel himself began: Dasein, being here and now. But the young Hegel had not yet made the conceptual leap from Diesseits to Jenseits. He spoke as if human nature, chained within the bonds of religion, might be able to see itself for what it really is, then free itself from bondage.

> When another mood awakens, when this nature begins to have a sense of itself and thereby to demand freedom in and for itself instead of placing it in its supreme Being, then and only then can its former religion begin to appear a positive one. The universal concepts of human nature are too empty to afford a criterion for the special and necessarily multiplex needs of religious feeling.[1]

The last words, "religious feeling", lead on to yet another characteristic of the young Hegel which Feuerbach adopted and made to serve his turn.

(4) Imagination and Feeling

Hegel's essay "The Spirit of Christianity" is in many respects a direct answer to Kant. Morality, thought Hegel, cannot be construed by the idea of duty. Love, not duty, is "the sole principle of virtue". Why? Because "a thought cannot be loved", morality must stem from the shared feelings of human beings. "Love for one's nearest neighbours is philanthropy toward those with whom each of us comes into contact." In this sense, love cannot be commanded. Rather love triumphs over duty and right. "'Love has conquered' does not mean the same as 'duty has conquered'." Rather it means that "love has overcome hostility". "One can only say 'Thou shalt love'. Love itself pronounces no imperative." Love is not a universal opposed to a particular, but it is a unity of spirit.

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1. ibid. p. 170

> To love God is to feel one's self in the "all" of life, with no restrictions, in the infinite. In this feeling of harmony there is no universality since in a harmony the particular is not in discord but in concord, or otherwise there would be no harmony. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" does not mean to love him as much as yourself, for self-love is a word without meaning. It means "love him as the man whom thou art," i.e. love is a sensing of a life similar to one's own, not a stronger or a weaker one. Only through love is the might of objectivity broken, for love upsets its whole sphere. The virtues, because of their limits, always put something objective beyond them, and the variety of virtues an all the greater and insurmountable multiplicity of objectivity. Love alone has no limits. What it has not united with itself is not objective to it; love has overlooked it or not yet developed it; it is not confronted by it.[1]

There is much more here than can easily be summarized. Briefly, Hegel seems to be saying that love is greater than any imperative stemming from ideas of virtue, because the ideas of virtue are objective renderings of an overarching tendency toward, and sense of, harmony, which is entailed in love; that both love for God and love for neighbour are derived from feeling, the ability to identify oneself in both the neighbour and universal 'harmony'. Because love is the apotheosis of this harmony, it is essentially unlimited, not subject to opposition. Virtues, on the other hand, always have their opposites.

Hegel draws an important distinction between the love that is "a living bond of unity" (i.e. Jesus among his disciples) and the love which is no longer present in relationship and must therefore be imagined. "Only a unification in love, made objective by imagination, can be the object of religious veneration."[2] (As Feuerbach put it, repeatedly, "The image is the thing of religion.")

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1. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity," (trans. Knox) op. cit. p. 247 cf. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. pp. 47-48 e.g. "What faith, creed, opinion separates, love unites." There is hardly any doubt that Feuerbach reflects this passage from Hegel. Feuerbach, however, does not accept Hegel's insistence that "self-love is a word without meaning."
2. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity" (trans. Knox) op. cit. p. 248. One might speculate that the conclusion of Albert Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical Jesus is intimately connected with this observation of Hegel. cf. Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, 3rd edition, E.T.:W. Montgomery, Adam and Charles Black, London 1954. (First published as Von Reimarus zu Wrede, 1906) But Nohl's German Edition of Hegel was not published until 1907.

Thus arose the central image (for Hegel) of Christian faith: the Lord's supper. Hegel demonstrates a smooth transition (in theory) from Jesus' actual presence with his disciples at the Upper Room, to the image of his presence bestowed upon the elements of bread and wine. (Feuerbach: Der Mensch ist,was er isst.) As Hegel puts it, "To eat and drink with someone is an act of union and is itself a felt union, not a conventional symbol.[1] "In this link between bread and persons, difference disappears, and with it the possibility of comparison. Things heterogeneous are here most intimately connected."[2] Hegel's biblical illustration is John 6: 56, "Who eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwelleth in me and I in him." But the very nature of the 'consubstantiation' defeats the religious possibility of the event.

> The spirit of Jesus in which his disciples are one has become a present object, a reality, for external feeling. Yet the love made objective, this subjective element become a thing, reverts once more to its nature, becomes subjective again in the eating. This return may perhaps in this respect be compared with the thought which in the written word becomes a thing and which recaptures its subjectivity out of an object, out of something lifeless, when we read. The simile would be more striking if the written word were read away, if by being understood it vanished as a thing, just as in the enjoyment of bread and wine not only is a feeling for these mystical objects aroused, not only is the spirit made alive, but the objects vanish as objects. Thus the action seems purer, more appropriate to its end, in so far as it affords spirit only, feeling only, and robs the intellect of its own, i.e. destroys the matter, the soulless. When lovers sacrifice before the altar of the goddess of love and the prayerful breath of their emotion fans their emotion to a white-hot flame, the goddess herself has entered their hearts, yet the marble statue remains standing in front of them. In the love-feast, on the other hand, the corporeal vanishes and only living feeling is present.[3]

For Hegel, the disappearance of the image, its absorption into one's own body leaving only the feeling in its place, signaled the eclipse of the true nature of Christianity, as love, because

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1. ibid
2. ibid p. 249
3. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity", (trans. Knox) op. cit. pp. 250-251

an image could not be cast that would incorporate this unity of matter and spirit. "The bread is to be eaten, the wine drunk, therefore they cannot be something divine."[1] Love becomes visible in and attached to something which is to be destroyed. Love is not "made objective enough" for it to be able to function as a religion. Feeling and intellect combat each other; for the community which follows Jesus' contemporaries, the same union that was experienced at the Upper Room could not be repeated, "because feeling's intensity was separate from the intellect and both were one-sided, because worship was incomplete, since something divine was promised and it melted away in the mouth."[2] The need of religion is an image; feeling alone, even as love, cannot be perpetuated in religious forms; because of love's unification of subject and object, objective images are inadequate; therefore love as 'religion' is impossible.

It is only a small jump from this line of reasoning to Feuerbach's adaptation: "Love is God himself and apart from it there is no God. Love makes man God and God man[3]...What do I love in God? Love itself, and specifically, love of man."..."To us there remains no immediate presence but that of love."[4]

5. The Incarnation and the Imagination

(1) Feuerbach's Explication and Re-interpretation of Hegel

Hegel suggested one more Christian image which attempts to objectify the feeling of love, but which, ultimately, results in confusion between love and the intellect.

> The image [of a crucified God] fell short of beauty and divinity because it lacked life. What was wanting in the community's life was an image and a shape. But in the risen Jesus, lifted up heavenward, the image found life again, and love found the objectification of its oneness. In this remarriage of spirit and body the opposition between the living and the dead Jesus has vanished, and the two are united in a God. Love's longing has found itself, and worship of this being is now the religion of

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1. ibid, p. 251
2. ibid, pp. 25-253
3. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 48
4. Ibid, p. 57

> the group. The need for religion finds its satisfaction in the risen Jesus, in love thus given shape.[1]

Because the Church demands such an image, because it cannot be content with the "peace in a nonpersonal living beauty", "it is its fate that church and state, worship and life, piety and virtue, spiritual and worldly action, can never dissolve into one."[2] Thus Hegel ends his essay on "The Spirit of Christianity." Thus Feuerbach begins his book on The Essence of Christianity:

> Religion is the disuniting of man from himself; he sets God before him as the antithesis of himself. God is not what man is - man is not what God is. God is the infinite, man the finite being; God is perfect, man imperfect; God eternal, man temporal; God almighty, man weak; God holy, man sinful. God and man are extremes: God is the absolutely positive, the sum of all realities; man the absolutely negative, comprehending all negations.[3]

What Hegel had implied, Feuerbach made explicit. The love revealed in the Incarnation of a man as God demonstrates, not the nature of God, but rather the "spirit" (Hegel) or the "essence" (Feuerbach) of humanity.

> In religion man contemplates his own latent nature. Hence it must be shown that this antithesis, this differencing of God and man, with which religion begins, is a differencing of man with his own nature.[4]

For Hegel, the hidden agenda in the Incarnation was to be deciphered by relating it to the activity of der Geist, spirit and/or mind, in all the forms of being, conceived as greater than but including human being. But for Feuerbach, the hidden meaning in the Incarnation was interpreted as the development of human feeling, stemming from sense experience, rising to objectification in the imagination, and shaped by practice which is correlated with what one believes to be true from the data of sense experience. In religion, what one believes is indeed the manifestation of sense experience and

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1. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity", (trans. Knox) op. cit. p. 292
2. ibid, p. 301
3. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 33
4. ibid

feeling, but the image is conceived in an alienated form, of God. not human being (Dasein).

Human need, characterized by Hegel as an "unhappy consciousness", becomes for Feuerbach the stimulus for "theogony" - the birth of the gods. Through the imagination, humans are able to fulfil the needs made conscious through sense and feeling. Whatever needs are incapable of satisfaction in this world by human practice are attributed to another object outside of this world, who is able to make things "out of nothing", to fulfill needs without the mediation of knowledge, tools, and material. In a good sense, the imagination supports human acquisition of knowledge. As old needs are satisfied, new ones arise; the old gods are displaced with new ones. Fertility cults blend into nature worship; the gods of war slowly become the gods of reason. Only as humanity begins to take itself as its own object, to become not merely conscious, but also self-conscious, does religion begin to assume the characteristics of love.

> It is the consciousness of love by which man reconciles himself with God, or rather with his own nature as represented in the moral law. The consciousness of the divine love, or what is the same thing, the contemplation of God as human, is the mystery of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is nothing else than the practical material manifestation of the human nature of God. God did not become man for his own sake; the need, the want of man- a want which still exists in the religious sentiment- was the cause of the Incarnation. God became man out of mercy: thus he was in himself already a human God before he became an actual man; for human want, human misery, went to his heart. The Incarnation was a tear of the divine compassion, and hence it was only the visible advent of a Being having human feelings and therefore essentially human.[1]

Although Feuerbach calls religion, "a waking dream, the opium of the people", one must not ignore the 'positive' force of his description. Religion is the sublimated objectification of human feeling, which through the images formulated in the need to believe, contains the "secret" of human nature.

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 50

(2) Christ as the Corporate Object of Human Self-Consciousness

While religion as the manifestation of human imagination is, unconsciously, the fulfilment of feeling in the creation of an object, a "thou", by which the human can understand his own nature, theology, Feuerbach says, is an abortive attempt to rationalize an illusion. It is one thing to objectify Jesus as the risen Lord, but quite another to attribute to him absolute qualities which are inflexible, impassible, and remote from human experience. Theology's great fault (and by implication, the fault of Hegel's later system of absolutes) is that it tends to crystallize the alienated image of religion in opposition to human experience, producing a wholly other, absolute, supernatural, and superhuman God.

As the images of religion are given rational form, the realization of authentic human qualities in practice is inhibited. The true significance of the Incarnation, on the other hand, is the disclosure of God as essentially human, "brought down to earth". Rational theology, thought Feuerbach, would prefer to leave God in the heavens, characterized by such terms as omniscient, omnipotent, Creator-out-of-nothing, and impassible. But the Incarnation contains the secret that God is touchable, compassionate, capable of suffering - "a being of the heart". Only a deity who can truly understand human feeling, the depths of human experience, can break the opposition between human being and divine being. The objectification of Jesus as God is in truth the objectification of the human capacity to love, made visible through the primary image of human need: the idea of humanity become God.

The Christian religion's assertion that God has become human is not only the imaginative objectification of God's embodiment in a particular individual, but it is also the collection in that individual of the whole "species" of humanity. Jesus's suffering is the suffering of all humanity; Jesus' victory over evil and death is the (imagined) victory of all humankind. But the collection

of the species in one person is essentially the work of the imagination, and it is therefore an idea which is not subject to rational categorization.

> Only love, admiration honour, in short only affect, only feeling, raises the individual to the level of our love, we exclaim: She is Beauty, Love, Goodness itself! But reason knows nothing of the actual, absolute Incarnation of the species in a particular individual...Incarnation and history are absolutely incompatible: where the Godhead enters into history, there history ends. But if history pursues its course as before, the theory of incarnation is factually refuted by history itself.[1]

In other words, says Feuerbach, the idea of corporate humanity is an ahistorical notion. History is a rational enterprise which assumes rational cause and effect. Corporate humanity, as an idea, is suprarational; it is not 'historical', and therefore it cannot be included in historical understanding. The Incarnation is of a radically different quality, subject only to the quality of feeling, emotion, and imagination.

Although Christianity does indeed posit the 'many' represented in the 'one' (Christ), such a representation is not subject to rational categories. In history, "the god of limitation stands as guardian of the gate." The idea of the Incarnation represents the unlimited imagery of corporate humanity, and is thus beyond rational method. (Feuerbach is here suggesting that both Kantian ethics and Hegelian historical dialectic cannot cope with the idea of the Incarnation as the representation of the human species.)

Through the imagery of the Incarnation Feuerbach suggests that the problem of "the many and the one" has been solved unconsciously.[2] The whole of humanity is collected into the life, death, and 'resurrection' of one individual, in a form that is beyond the critique of history. The problem however, is that the reconciliation

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1. Feuerbach, Zur Critik der Hegelschen Philosophie, Bolin-Jodl, II, op. cit. pp. 162-164; trans. Wartofsky in Feuerbach, op. cit, p.177
2. For a more exhaustive account of Feuerbach's "Incarnation Theory", cf. Marx Wartofsky, Feuerbach, op. cit. pp. 226 ff.

has been achieved unconsciously, through the imagination, and objectified as a religious belief which is incapable of realizing that the union is relevant to the individual's connection to his species, in this world.

(3) Feuerbach's Epistemology: The Encounter of I and Thou

For Feuerbach, feeling objectified in the imagination is the very basis of knowledge. What is picked up through the senses is projected as an image in the brain where the image becomes the matter of thought. For him there is no thinking without images, much less without the matter that affords the primary stimuli for the brain through sight, smell, touch, hearing, and tasting. Imagination is therefore the border between mind and matter. Without its contribution there would indeed be a dualism between them. But through the work of the imagination, sensation and feeling are the conditions for thought. Organic, physical existence is the condition of sensation and feeling, and only an existing being can think. Imagination is the link, therefore, between organic physical activity and the activity of thought. Feuerbach's synthesis between mind and matter has been described as "dialectical monism", that is, a philosophical unity in which matter is resolved through sense imagery into the material of thought.[1]

Since it is the objectification of sensory experience, as feeling, which brings consciousness of the external world to human beings, the feeling which arises as humans encounter others of their species brings to consciousness information about the species. At its highest pitch, this feeling is love. For Feuerbach, love is not just a feeling, it is the goal of all feeling.

> A fully realized human being has the capacity to think, to will, and to love. These are the fullest realizations, the greatest powers, the absolute essence of man as man, and are the goal or end of his existence. Man exists in

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1. ibid. p. 249. In this sense, Feuerbach resembles the later Hegel.

> order to know, to love, to will. But what is the end of reason? Reason itself. What is the object or goal of love? Love itself. Of the Will? Freedom to will.. The divine trinity in man, over and above individual men is the unity of Reason, Love and Will.[1]

In Feuerbach's dialectic of sensibility, love itself thereby becomes material in character. It is the matter of "the heart", the substance in which human being's most profound essence may be acknowledged. The understanding of reason cannot comprehend the sensuousness with which a human being is able to identify his neighbour in himself, nor himself in his neighbour. "The understanding knows nothing of the desires of the heart." Only by making love impersonal and objective in a God is reason able to think that which is profoundly sensuous. The power of abstraction, "the impersonal power in man", brings the mind to "a painful collision with the heart".[2] Reason posits a God who is the objectified wish of man, omnipotent, universal, omniscient, infinite, impassible. But love stipulates that "God can only exist if he is acknowledged as a being with human, sensuous qualities".[3] The belief in the incarnation of God into the form of humanity is, for Feuerbach, the surest proof of love as a substantial attribute, and the essential nature, of human being. The Incarnation is the unconscious, yet substantive insistence upon a human thou; personal, finite, sensuous, and sympathetic to suffering, which enfolds the many in the one and realizes the imaginative, yet intrinsically valid, reconciliation of human individuals with humankind.

4. The Incarnation as the Image of Love.

In Feuerbach's epistemology every object of consciousness, every feeling imaginatively objectified, becomes "a mirror for man". The object of sense, projected in the brain, provides data not only about the object but also about the human himself in his interaction

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. p.3
2. ibid, p. 34
3. ibid, p. 50

with the object. In religion, the projected image of God is the result of man taking himself as his own object; therefore the object itself is the image of human nature. Feuerbach's characteristic aphorism suggests the interrelated themes which contribute to religious imagery: "By his God you know the man, and conversely, by the man you know his God."

> The object of any subject is nothing else than the subject's own nature taken objectively. Such as are a man's thoughts and dispositions, such is his God; so much worth as a man has, so much and no more has his God. Consciousness of God is self-knowledge. By his God thou knowest the man, and by the man his God; the two are identical. Whatever is God to a man, that is his heart and soul; and conversely, God is the inward manifested nature, the expressed self of a man,- religion the solemn unveiling of man's hidden treasures, the revelation of his intimate thoughts, the open confession of his love-secrets.[1]

In the above quotation, Marian Evans' rendering of der Mensch as "a man" does not contain the double significance implied by Feuerbach. A better term might be "the human being", or "humanity". Although Feuerbach is indeed talking about an individual person, he is also referring to human nature in general.

Religion, as a social expression, is the imagination of a corporate 'mind', as well as the expression of individual piety. Only with the double meaning can Feuerbach's understanding of love as a material element in epistemology be appreciated. In the Incarnation, it is not merely "a man" that is objectified in the image of God —— become ——man; it is all men and women, all humanity. In Christianity the image of God (originally) is the image of the human individual in reconciliation with the human species. For Feuerbach, the image is valid because God is no longer characterized as brute force or capricious will, but rather as a 'human' being, able to suffer, consistently loving, and limited in space and time.

Thus, in the Incarnation, the imagination plays its finest role. Not only is "man" exalted into a God, but love is exalted

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. p.12

into a substance. Feeling, which is experienced in every human encounter of I and thou, disclosed in the image of Christ, is the potential bond between the individual and the species. In the thou, the individual 'senses' himself, learns about himself, and projects his own possibilities in correlation with the 'sensible' data received from another like himself.

But the possibilities revealed through love are ultimately inexplicable to reason. In the Incarnation an image of love is cast which asserts the divinity, the infinity, of human love despite its oppositions and frustrations. For Feuerbach, "feeling is the substance of sensuous life." The difference in quality between feelings which arise from empirical objects and those which arise from other feeling objects implies the difference between sensation and love. Only love can give real information to a human being about himself; only in loving does a person become truly self-conscious.

The Incarnation is Christianity's sublimated way of acknowledging that love is the substance of human, sensuous life. Feuerbach was greatly influenced by Jacob Boehme, who noted that feeling is "the source of all suffering and joy". Boehme is quoted by Feuerbach: "Why do you seek God in the depths or beyond the stars? You shall not find him there. Seek him in your heart, in the center of your life's origin. There you shall find him."[1]

But Feuerbach was not content to characterize God as the anthropomorphic projection of an individual piety. For him, true feeling could only be disclosed in the actual encounter with another feeling object; and the encounter itself, between I and thou, finds form in the image of a suffering, loving, human God. Just as there must be a real object which can only give rise to empirical sense experience, there must be a real (i.e. appropriate) object for the development of feeling: a human object, a thou. For Hegel, in his later

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1. Feuerbach, Die Geschichte der Neueren Philosophie, Bolin-Jodl, III op. cit. p. 173; quoted and translated in Wartofsky, Feuerbach, op. cit. p. 75

works, the subject need only take himself as an imaginary object for the development of self-consciousness to arise.[1] Feuerbach insisted upon a reflexive, authentic thou; otherwise feeling does not attain consciousness, and the individual only projects his own ego upon an imaginary 'essence'. But with the dialectical movement between a real I and a real thou, feeling may break into consciousness as a consciousness of actualized, or at least humanly potential, love.

> The first stone upon which the pride of egohood is broken is the Thou, the other I...My fellowman is the bond between myself and the world. I am and I feel myself to be dependent on the world because I first feel myself to be dependent on other men. If I didn't need other men, I wouldn't need the world either. I reconcile myself with the world, befriend it only through my fellowman. Without these others, the world would be not only dead and empty for me, but also meaningless and incomprehensible. Only in his fellowman does man become clear to himself and self-conscious...Man's first object is man.[2]

Only as human encounters human, only as a feeling object is apprehended by a feeling subject, can love as the greatest manifestation of feeling arise into consciousness. Neither rational deduction nor egotistical piety can express the character of love. But love, as a substance, as the bond between the individual and the species, as the goal of feeling itself, is disclosed in the Incarnation. The imagery suggests that love itself is divine in nature, and that the human which loves has something of the infinite about him.

Feuerbach's assertion that love entails "the exaltation of man into God" is the viewpoint by which he is most often cast in the guise of the arch-heretic, the original atheist. Yet he said that "A real atheist...is one for whom the predicates of divine being are nothing, but not one for whom only the subject of these predicates is nothing."[3] Love is the predicate of God, revealed

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1. G.W.F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J.B. Baillie, London 1910, Vol. I, p. 176f.
2. Feuerbach, Das Wesen des Christentums, Bolin-Jodl VI, pp. 99-100, (trans, Wartofsky in Feuerbach, op. cit. p. 311)
3. ibid. p. 306

in the Incarnation, as the imagination's authentic synthesis between the divine and the human. Love becomes not only the substance of God, but also the essential substance of humanity. Perhaps the exaltation of love in the Incarnation, as the substantive bond between the individual and the species, the divine and the human, could be as enlightening for theology as Feuerbach's "exaltation of man" is threatening.

6. Imagination: Theory and Practice

In his book The Understanding of Faith, Edward Schillebeeckx observes that it is very difficult to draw distinct lines between theory and practice, or between 'interpretation' and 'change'.

> In an interview on German television, I recently heard the old philosopher Martin Heidegger say that Marx, in the first part of his well-known statement, "philosophers interpret the world, the point is to change it", denies what is implicitly presupposed in the second half. Certainly, to assert that the world has to be changed implies a certain interpretation of reality and is itself already an interpretation.[1]

Karl Marx considered both Hegel and Feuerbach too abstract in their interpretations of the world. What Feuerbach lacked, Marx thought, was a concept of human activity which is related to actual production as well as self-consciousness and essential creativity.[2] Marx's criticism of Feuerbach was, however, somewhat one-sided, without proper attention to the complexity of Feuerbach's analysis of the work of the imagination.

Louis Althusser aptly summarizes the enigma Feuerbach was for Marx: "Feuerbach was always thinking about politics, but hardly ever talked about it."[3] Feuerbach's programme for overcoming human self-alienation in religion was intended to develop practically into a "freedom in community" grounded upon the "divinity" in human love. But, as D.W.D. Shaw comments, "How that community is to be

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1. Edward Schillebeeckx, The Understanding of Faith, Sheed and Ward, London, 1974, (E.T.: N.D. Smith) cf. especially Chapter 4. Schillebeeckx envisages hermeneutics as 'praxis' in embryo, conditioned by a critical theory which is sensitive not only to scholarship but also to the world social-political context.
2. cf. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", op. cit. (Thesis I)
3. Louis Althusser, For Marx, London, 1970, p. 45

realized is not really Feuerbach's question, even though he did say that 'politics must become our religion'."[1] In contrast, Marx "in exposing the fallacy of religion was therefore intensely practical. It only arose insofar as it was relevant or necessary to understand it and explain it as it contributed to, or much more likely thwarted, the progress of society to a freer, juster condition."[2]

As Althusser has shown, much of Marx's critique of religion is adopted directly from Feuerbach. The following is an example:

> Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.
>
> The abolition of religion, as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their real happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their condition is a call to abandon a condition which requires illusions...Thus the criticism of heaven transforms itself into the criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law, and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics.[3]

Marx's implication that religion is primarily and essentially a function of social conditions does not allow for the integrity of the human need to believe. Nor can the human capacity to transform nature through practical productivity completely remove it.

If Feuerbach's writings have retained their challenge to philosophy as well as to the practical implications of religion and theology (cf. below, Chapter Five), we need not be intimidated by Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach". In Thesis VIII he wrote: "All social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice." As Iring Fetscher has remarked, "Das ist sicher alles ganz richtig, aber doch nicht die ganze Wahrheit."[4] The dynamics of social life may yet contain some 'mysteries' that demand more creative interpretation and theory before such dynamics become comprehensible and capable of practical integration with

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1. D.N.D. Shaw, The Dissuaders, SCM Press, London, 1978, p. 33
2. ibid. p. 34
3. Karl Marx, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction, in Marx:Early Writings, Penguin, Middlesex, 1975.
4. Iring Fetscher, "Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx", Hegelstudien, Bonn, 1963 p. 376 ("That is certainly all quite correct, but not quite the whole truth.")

modern needs. Resolution of social mysteries cannot be achieved by practice, unless practice itself contains the dynamics of theory and interpretation. (Marx's idea of practice does indeed assume such.)

In a sense, the perennial condemnation of Feuerbach by Marxists is a one-sided argument for the chicken at the expense of the egg. The origins of the theory-practice relation hail neither from Marx nor Hegel, but rather from the Lycaeum in Athens. As Aristotle observed, one can hardly do without either. Whereas Feuerbach has proposed a theory which he hoped would lead to practice, Marx proposed a practice which constantly discovers new theory. If Marx's idea of practice is understood as he intended, one certainly might prefer his version over Feuerbach's. Nevertheless, we must be careful not to write Feuerbach off too quickly.

As I have already observed, Feuerbach's 'dialectic of sensibility' depends upon the 'material' character of love, and upon the 'practice' which is latent in human imagination. Feeling and love constitute "the matter of the heart" by which humanity has access to its true nature.

> The conception of the morally perfect being is no merely theoretical, inert conception, but a practical one, calling me to action, to imitation, throwing me into strife, into disunion with myself; for while it proclaims to me what I ought to be, it also tells me to my face, without any flattery, what I am not.[1]

There is in the religious imagination a practical tendency, which, even though it represents the alienation of humanity from itself, is nevertheless an indication of the 'practice' in the human imagination.

Adopting literally Luther's remark: "Belief is my being", Feuerbach sees belief, dependent upon religious imagination, as the potential capacity for the fulfilment of human needs in every respect.

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 47

Worship is closely associated with the primary character of belief, as a practice in embryo. Disclosed in the symbolic imagery of the sacraments and prayer, the practice in belief reveals 'infinite' capacities of human beings for utilizing and transforming their environment. The eucharist, for example, provides the link between human creativity and dependence upon nature; "Nature gives the material, mind gives the form." But beyond this 'materialist' interpretation, Feuerbach also recognizes in the eucharist the 'practice' which Marx fails to acknowledge. There is in human nature a profound capacity for turning evil into good, suffering into love, the ego into community.

It is the infinite capacity of the imagination to create without recourse to matter (symbolized by prayer) which inspires human practice. Construction in the imagination is indispensable and prior to the act of making. Imagination, in fact, is the essence of making, according to Feuerbach.

> This distinction between the divine and human activity is 'nothing'. God makes, - he makes something external to himself, as man does. Making is a genuine human idea. Nature gives birth to, brings forth; man makes. Making is an act which I can omit, a designed, premeditated, external act; an act in which my inmost being is not concerned, in which while active, I am not at the same time passive, carried away by an internal impulse. On the contrary, an activity which is identical with my being is not indifferent, is necessary to me, as, for example, intellectual production, which is an inward necessity to me, and for that reason lays a deep hold on me, affects me pathologically. Intellectual works are not made, - making is only the external activity applied to them; they arise in us. To make is an indifferent, therefore a free, i.e. optional activity.[1]

In the above extract, we can see that for Feuerbach, the activity of making is secondary to the activity of feeling and thinking. What happens in the imagination is more attuned to human being, as such, than the effort in making the image real, which may be frustrated.

However, Feuerbach does not totally enfold his concept of

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 220

practice within the imagination, for despite its priority, there is an indispensable human quality in the joy of creation. Compare:

> The idea of activity, of making, of creation, is in itself a divine idea; it is therefore unhesitatingly applied to God. In activity, man feels himself free, unlimited, happy; in passivity, limited, oppressed, unhappy. Activity is the positive sense of one's personality. That is positive which in man is accompanied with joy...We succeed only in what we like to do; joyful effort conquers all things. But that is joyful activity which is in accordance with our nature, which we do not feel as a limitation, and consequently not as a constraint. And the happiest, the most blissful activity is that which is productive.[1]

I am not sure that the two extracts above may be reconciled, and to this degree, Marx's critique of Feuerbach's idea of practice may be justified. However, the repeated assertion by Marxists that Feuerbach has no notion of 'praxis', or practice, is inadmissible, unless they simply mean that Marx disagreed with it.

Interpreting the idea of 'praxis' in Marxist terms, Wartofsky says:

> ...Feuerbach trembles on the brink of a notion of praxis. For "to make nature practically compliant in the service of human needs" by actual means derived from nature seems to describe the actual work process itself, the transformation of nature by purposive, need-satisfying labor. The terms Feuerbach uses for this capacity to meet needs remain, however, Bildung and Kultur, but never Arbeit. Thus the union of nature and human nature is formulated by him in terms of conceptions of both nature and the human that remain abstract, somewhat romantic, prescientific, and prepolitical.[2]

Wartofsky, it seems, has ignored the reference quoted penultimately above: "And the happiest, the most blissful activity is that which is productive." Nevertheless, it is unfair to force Feuerbach's concept of essential human creativity too quickly into the mould of actual productivity. Although the creativity arising from the 'work' of the imagination, and belief resulting from it, have an implicit function in the transformation of nature, as well as in the formation of a genuinely human community, Feuerbach stresses

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1. ibid. p. 217
2. Wartofsky, Feuerbach, op. cit. pp. 393-394,397.

that the latent activity in belief, expressed through religious consciousness or otherwise, is closer to the source of the human ability to change the world than the actual work involved in the transformation. Without imagination, there can hardly be any "purposive, need-satisfying labor". Without beliefs about the world, and interpretations of the characteristics of nature, there can hardly be any transformation of it.

It is only a short conceptual leap from the activity of making things to the activity of building communities. But the 'tools' required, and the frustrations encountered, may be somewhat incommensurable. For this reason, perhaps, Feuerbach hesitated to associate his idea of human activity too closely with actual matter, tools, and economic or productive forces. Perhaps he retained some of the theologian's fear that as soon as the kingdom of God is objectified, removed from the 'infinite' possibilities in the imagination, it may be lost. In any case, I do not think Feuerbach can be accused of having ignored the material and social conditions which limit but also make possible human production, nor to have remained wholly within a theoretical framework. The imagination is the catalyst for human making, human creativity, and human community. Its objectification or artificial delimitation would be antithetical to his whole philosophy.

7. Feuerbach's Implicit Critique of Theology

(1) Feuerbach as Theologian?

Properly speaking, Ludwig Feuerbach's writings cannot be taken as theological in character or intention. His project, as he repeatedly asserted, was to convert theology into "anthropology". What theology purportedly says about God is invalid because it is an attempt to make rational the images of religion. Similarly, philosophy conceived as the formulation of absolute concepts is no better than theology, because rational method alone cannot understand the feeling nature of humanity. "The philosophy of the future", he suggested,

must be an attempt to understand the whole of human being, on this earth, grounded upon an analysis of the 'head, heart, and stomach' of actual persons existing in a community of others like them.[1]

Nevertheless, talk about the exaltation of man into God, about love being "divine", "infinite", and "God himself", is tantamount to throwing down the gauntlet in the theological arena; or perhaps even more aptly, it is like nailing one's theses to the door of the church. Thus it may not be surprising that Feuerbach has been called the "thorn in the flesh" of modern theologians.[2] Karl Barth took Feuerbach's theological contribution seriously, describing him as "more theological than many theologians."[3] Much of Barth's critique of Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Harnack, and of the central issues of nineteenth century liberal theology, is encapsulated in Barth's introduction to the re-edition of The Essence of Christianity, (1957), which gave rise to a major theological debate.[4] Although Barth appreciated Feuerbach's acute analysis of Luther, his contribution to the 19th century struggle for liberation in Germany, and his revelation of the inherent anthropocentrism of Schleiermacherian liberal theology, Barth concluded that talk about "God in man" must be excised at the roots. Feuerbach's concept of anthropology could never take the place of a theology which is based on God's supreme creativity and grace. Nevertheless, Barth suggested, God cannot be 'defined' in rational "hypostases" remote from the human condition and human responsibility. "The Church will recover from the sting of Feuerbach's question only when her ethics is fundamentally separated from the worship of old and new hypostases and ideologies. Only then will people again accept

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1. Feuerbach, Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft, Bolin-Jodl II, (1843).
2. Karl Barth, Introduction to The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. (cf. Karl Barth, Theology and Church, Shorter writings 1920-1928. E.T. L.P. Smith, Intro. by T.F. Torrance, SCM Press, London 1962, Chapter VII.)
3. ibid
4. cf. John Glasse, "Barth on Feuerbach", Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 57, pp. 69 ff.; Manfred Vogel, "The Barth-Feuerbach Confrontation" Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 59, pp. 27 ff.; Hans Frei, "Feuerbach and Theology", Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Vol. 35, pp 250 ff.

the Church's word that her God is not merely an illusion."[1]

The theology which Feuerbach considered and criticized had yet to be conditioned by many of the anthropological interests which he himself helped to arouse. (His own era witnessed, for example, the increasing popularity of Schleiermacher, the beginnings of modern biblical criticism in Bruno Bauer and D.F. Strauss, the publications of Kierkegaard, and the first works of Ritschl.) Talk about God was divine; as such it presupposed the doctrines of God's immutability, omnipotence, omniscience, and impassibility. The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas had set an example for thinking about God which was followed not only in Catholic, but also in Protestant theology. God must be above and beyond human feeling because human passions are capricious; God must not suffer because he must not be subject to evil; God must be omnipotent and omniscient, transcending time and space. As Manfred Vogel said in assessing the effect of Feuerbach upon Barth, "Feuerbach is the great anti-theologian only if we equate theology generally with the neo-platonic idealist formulation."[2]

Feuerbach himself said, "What today is atheism tomorrow will be religion."[3] Due to an increasing tendency to understand God's relatedness to his creatures and to the human condition, theology has often been 'corrected' in light of Feuerbach's criticisms and his influence. Today, despite Barth's hope for the excision of "talk about God in man", anthropological theology is not necessarily construed as atheism. But on the other hand, after Barth's critique of Feuerbach, it is not so easy to be vaguely 'liberal' without taking account of the inadequacies of human nature.

Yet, anyone who has insight into the dialectical pattern of Feuerbach's writings might find it difficult to accept at face value the judgment of Manfred Vogel: "Either start with man and end up with

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1. Karl Barth, Introduction to Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit.
2. Manfred Vogel, "The Barth-Feuerbach Confrontation" HTR 59, (op. cit. p. 27)
3. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. p. 32

Feuerbach, or turn to Barth and stay with God...Either Barth or Feuerbach."[1] Even if Feuerbach himself must be taken as a theologian 'on the fringe' if a theologian at all, his theological contribution has been considerable. Perhaps a theology which views love as a concept implying both divine and human qualities will not find it necessary to draw the distinct line that Vogel has drawn. In honour of both Feuerbach's and Barth's interest in "the heart and stomach" of humanity, Father Robert Farrar Capon's practical advice might be applied: "No wise man will look for any more divisions in life than there already are."[2] The difference between Barth and Feuerbach, or between 'neo-orthodoxy' and 'liberalism', does not necessarily entail an 'either/or'.[3]

(2) Summary of Feuerbach's Idea of Love as Agenda for Theology

An attempt to characterize Feuerbach's idea of love is very like trying to reduce Hegel's idea of spirit, or Barth's idea of grace, to a concise statement. The inherent pervasiveness of the concept prohibits particular description. So many ideas overlap, even apparently conflicting with each other, that only a very general summary is conceivable. First, let us consider the broadest summary of Feuerbach himself:

> Now, by what means does man deliver himself from this state of disunion between himself and the perfect being, from the painful consciousness of sin, from the distressing sense of his own nothingness? How does he blunt the fatal sting of sin? Only by this; that he is conscious of <u>love</u> as the highest, the absolute power and truth, that he regards the Divine Being not only as a law, as a moral being, as a being of the understanding; but also as a tender, loving, even subjective human being (that is, as having sympathy with individual man).

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1. Vogel, "The Barth-Feuerbach Confrontation", <u>HTR</u> Vol. 59, op. cit. p. 30
2. Robert Farrar Capon, <u>The Supper of the Lamb</u>, Doubleday, New York, 1969, p. 143. Appropriately enough, Capon's book is a theological cookbook.
3. Barth himself moved away from the strict distinction (without, however, equating humanity and God) cf. <u>The Humanity of God</u>, John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1960.

> The understanding judges only according to the stringency of law; the heart accommodates itself, is considerate, lenient, relenting, kat' anthrōpon. No man is sufficient for the law which moral perfection sets before us; but for that reason, neither is the law sufficient for man, for the heart. The law condemns; the heart has compassion even on the sinner. The law affirms me only as an abstract being, - love, as a real being. Love gives me the consciousness that I am a man; the law only the consciousness that I am a sinner, that I am worthless. The law holds man in bondage; love makes him free.
>
> Love is the middle term, the substantial bond, the principle of reconciliation between the perfect and the imperfect, the sinless and sinful being, the universal and the individual, the divine and the human. Love is God himself, and apart from it there is no God. Love makes man God and God man. Love strengthens the weak and weakens the strong, abases the high and raises the lowly, idealises matter and materialises spirit. Love is the true unity of God and man, of spirit and nature. In love common nature is spirit, and the pre-eminent spirit is nature. Love is to deny spirit from the point of view of spirit, to deny matter from the point of view of matter. Love is materialism; immaterial love is a chimaera. In the longing of love after the distant object, the abstract idealist involuntarily confirms the truth of sensuousness. But love is also the idealism of nature - love is also spirit, esprit. Love alone makes the nightingale a songstress; love alone gives the plant its corolla. And what wonders does not love work in our social life! What faith creed, opinion separates, love unites. Love even, humorously enough, identifies the high noblesse with the people. What the old mystics said about God, that he is the highest and yet the commonest of beings, applies in truth to love, and that not a visionary, imaginary love - no! A real love which has flesh and blood, which vibrates as an almighty force through all living.[1]

There is no doubt that Feuerbach conceives this many-sided idea of love as the "secret" (Geheimnis) of the Incarnation, and the authentic agenda of theology. "While I do reduce theology to anthropology I exalt anthropology to theology, very much as Christianity, while lowering God into man, made man into God."[2] But such a notion of love, Feuerbach maintains, cannot be entailed in an idea of God conceived as (a) a being or principle of moral perfection; (b) an absolute creator or prime mover unrelated to creation; (c) an impassible yet illogically 'compassionate' deity;[3] (d) a sexless and

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. pp 47-48
2. ibid, p. XV (quoted by Barth)
3. ibid, p. 53: Feuerbach quotes St. Bernard's pun to show that love cannot be divorced from suffering: "Impassibilis est Deus, sed non incompassibilis, cui proprium est misereri semper et parcere." - and adds: "Als wäre nicht Mitleiden Leiden, freilich Leiden der Liebe, Leiden des Herzens." The pun is lost in Evans' English: "As if compassion were not suffering..." A better translation might be: "As if sympathy were not pathos..."

therefore impotent deity unconnected with species procreation; or (e) the projection of individual egotism in personal or group piety. Least of all can God be construed as (f) a "demonic being" who manipulates his creatures at the expense of human freedom, who demands faith for himself at the expense of love for human beings.

As Barth notes, Feuerbach was an excellenct Lutheran scholar; much of Feuerbach's emphasis upon the vitality of belief, and upon the deep relationship between love and suffering, comes from Luther.[1] But where Luther went wrong, Feuerbach suspected, was in the subjugation of love to faith. Luther could not have his cake and eat it; either the intense feeling represented in the Incarnation is proclaimed as the essence of a belief in love, or else one must cling to the obsolete forms of God as a despotic lawgiver. Barth says Feuerbach was correct in judging that Luther's emphasis upon faith edged out his emphasis upon love. "One may no longer repeat these things from Luther without some caution," said Barth. Feuerbach's ultimate reply to Luther was "the contradiction between faith and love" as demonstrated in the tragic history of doctrinal faith. (As we have seen, Hegel preceded Feuerbach in this observation.)

The Incarnation shows that "in God love is absorbed in itself as its own ultimate truth."

> Love remains, but the Incarnation upon the earth passes away. But the essence is eternal and universal. We can no longer believe in the manifestation for its own sake, but only for the sake of the thing manifested; for to us there remains no immediate presence but that of love.[2]

Thus the rational speculation about the person of Christ is superfluous; and, as Hegel had shown, the image only perpetuates the objectification of love, making religion possible, but contradictory to love itself. Therefore, said Feuerbach, "love conquers God". Love

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1. cf. Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty in Three Treatises, Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1943. cf. Feuerbach, The Essence of Faith According to Luther trans. M. Cherno, Harper, New York, 1967)
2. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. p. 57;... Compare Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity," trans. Knox, op. cit. pp. 248-251

is a higher power and truth than deity. "As God has renounced himself out of love, so we, out of love should renounce God; for if we do not sacrifice God to love, we sacrifice love to God, and in spite of the predicates of love, we have the God - the evil being - of religious fanaticism."[1] In other words, Feuerbach takes Hegel's implication as gospel. Since concepts of God are inadequate for a description of love (at least in Feuerbach's view), since an objectification of love in the image of Christ serves to perpetuate an objective faith which is contradicted by subjective love and the species nature of human beings, and since, in any case, God is an image above and beyond the analysis of reason, love must be exalted into a substance and theology must be renounced as the rationalization of an illusion. "So long as love is not exalted into a substance, into an essence, there lurks in the background the phantom of religious fanaticism."[2]

But once humanity throws off its theological disguise to find itself underneath, just what sort of love is revealed? Many of Feuerbach's 'anthropological' characterizations have already been mentioned above, but to conclude our summary we can now try to list the forms of love which characterize the essence of humanity for Feuerbach.

(a) Love is a life-force, an eros, which operates through all living.[3] "The life of life is love." (Feuerbach uses the idea of eros, but not the word.)

(b) Love is a principle of reconciliation and unity, between nature and spirit, between the one and the many, between I and thou. As such it is the creative force in the formation of species. It

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1. ibid. p. 53; cf. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity" (trans. Knox) op. cit. p.281 "Equally alien is every spirit of cooperation for something other than the dissemination of faith, every spirit which reveals and enjoys itself in other modes and restricted forms of life. In such a spirit the community would not recognize itself; to have done so would have been to renounce its own spirit and be untrue to its God." (Thus Hegel typically characterizes the opposition between faith and love.)
2. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. p. 52
3. cf. Feuerbach's diary, above

is dependent upon matter, perceived through the senses, projected in the imagination as feeling, by which subject is reconciled with object, spirit reconciled with nature.

(c) Love is 'divine', the revelation of a higher nature for man, containing the quality of the infinite. Just what "infinite" means for Feuerbach is not clear; in any case, reason cannot be applied to it. Nevertheless, the objectification of love in religion, especially the Incarnation of Jesus as God reveals love as the most 'divine' experience of the human. "Thou believest in love as a divine attribute because thou thyself lovest."[1]

(d) Love is key to self-consciousness and self-knowledge. It plays a vital role in Feuerbach's notion of epistemology: "only the love of others tells you what you are." The love between human beings in a human community is not merely a feeling, but it is also the basis of knowledge about the individual among his species. Thus the knowledge may be used to build greater communities through education, culture and work. Thus love is also the foundation for Feuerbach's idea of practice, based upon the imagination.

(e) Love is an ethical principle. The imperative of love is infinitely greater than the power of despotism. Law is not adequate to tell human beings what to do. Only with a consciousness of love is ethical behaviour possible. The "imperative" stems from the identification of the 'I' in the 'thou'. The human being recognizes in his neighbour a 'heart' like his own; and in identification with the neighbour's 'feeling' behaves toward him humanly, as a co-member of a 'species'.

(f) Love is the means of self-reconciliation from sin. Feuerbach quotes Luther: "God is not really angry, even when we think he is

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1. It would be hazardous to attempt to say what Feuerbach implies in his use of the word 'divine'. A predicate of God, such as 'benevolence' or 'justice', he says, is divine itself, but implies no attempt to project an object containing all the perfections of the predicate, so far as he is concerned. cf. The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p.21.

angry and punishes." Humanity demands a merciful God, even while hypostatising a God of judgment. Hence the Incarnation of Christ, the religious tradition surrounding Mary, Jesus' mother, and even the doctrine of the Holy Spirit signify that humanity demands tenderness from its God, full of love which redeems the guilty. "Mercy is the justice of sensuous life."

(g) Love is a genetic principle. Mysticism is sublimated sexuality; chastity in religion misguided fidelity to an objective image. "If God is not polluted by nature, neither is he polluted by being associated with the idea of sex...The 'thou' between man and woman has quite another sound than the monotonous 'thou' between friends."[1] (Love as a genetic principle is of course related to Feuerbach's idea of love as a life force.)

(h) Love is creative energy. "The imperative of love works with electromagnetic power; that of despotism with the mechanical power of a wooden telegraph."[2] "The divine love is the joy of life, establishing itself, affirming itself...Bliss lies in the act of imparting, and only joy, only love, imparts."[3]

(i) The source of love is the common human experience of suffering. "Kein Leid, kein Mitleid." Without the sharing of human suffering in feeling, in the imagination, as the 'I' encounters the 'thou', there can be no compassion. The representation of corporate suffering is contained in the image of Christ. "To suffer evil is better than to do good." Good works stimulated from an ethical imperative cannot replace spontaneous love which stems from identification of the self in the neighbour's condition. For Feuerbach, as for Hegel, love is not 'commandable'.

(j) Love for self is requisite for love for others. (cf.

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans) op. cit. p. 92
2. ibid, p. 125
3. ibid. p. 111

The diary, above) "That which exists has necessarily a pleasure, a joy in itself, loves itself, and loves itself justly; to blame it because it loves itself is to reproach it because it exists."[1] (In this important regard, Feuerbach deviates from both Luther and early Hegel.) This view of self-love, in its proper context, appears to be a prerequisite for the conception of love as a creative, sustaining, principle of living. However, while affirming a healthy self-love, Feuerbach was consistent in condemning the individualistic egoism of, for example, Max Stirner.[2] For Feuerbach a self is only constituted as a self through reflection by other humans. In criticism of Stirner's egoism, Feuerbach wrote:

> To have no religion is to think only of oneself. To have religion is to think of others. And this is the only religion that will persist, at least as long as there is not only one "singular" individual in the world; for as soon as there are two people, where there are man and wife, we already have religion. Difference is the origin of religion-the Thou is the God of the I, for there is no me without you. I depend on you: No Thou- no I.[3]

Self-love is no less a problem for anthropology than it is for theology. In his emphasis upon species, Feuerbach goes to the length of denying the concept of individual personality and individual sin, while attempting to maintain a notion of self-love.[4] His apparent confusion, or, at least, lack of clarity, on the relation between self-love and species-consciousness remains.

In attempting to change religion into a developing species-consciousness, and theology into anthropology, Feuerbach nevertheless retains some idea of both religion and theology. As his critique of Stirner demonstrates, the inherent creativity, epistemology, and community ideals represented in the encounter between I and thou

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (trans. Marian Evans, op. cit. p. 63
2. cf. Max Stirner, The Ego and His Own, (Trans. Stephen T. Byington) in Marshall S. Shatz, editor: The Essential Works of Anarchism, 1971 (Bantam P.B.)
3. Feuerbach, Ueber das Wesen des Christentums, (trans. Wartofsky) in Feuerbach op. cit.p.431
4. Feuerbach attempts to resolve individual sin in community complementarity. What is imperfect in the individual is perfected in the species. Marx was not impressed. cf. Thesis VI,"Theses on Feuerbach" op. cit.

are religious concepts. Similarly, the implicit morality entailed in the image of love as represented in the anthropology of the Incarnation, despite Feuerbach's reductionist simplifications, continues to be a theological understanding of ethics. Feuerbach's 'materialism' is one which insists on a comprehension of the Christian sacraments. His interpretation of humanity revealed in the Incarnation is stated as an attempt "to posit the infinite in the finite". His idea of love is certainly not limited to the natural phenomena of species origins, but is alleged to be "divine". Whether or not Feuerbach can be characterized as an "absolut Ungläubiger",[1] his agenda is theological in character, with religious implications.

(3) Feuerbach's "Anthropology" as a Preliminary Critique of Modern Theology.

Karl Barth spoke of Feuerbach and his generation as a Menne-Tekel for the Church, "in the face of which she should not become pharisaically indignant but should do penance."[2] After appreciating Feuerbach's contribution toward a critique of modern theology, Barth concluded that finally, one must be able to "laugh in his face". God's love is different from human love; God and man are not the same; Feuerbach's reductions are crude and his aphorisms are "logic chopping"; Feuerbach was "a true child of his century, a "Nichtkenner" of death and a "Verkenner" of evil."[3] While Barth's assessment of Feuerbach is perceptive and acute, a slightly different interpretation may be possible for a theological understanding of Feuerbach.

(a) The difference between theology conceived as "anthropology" and that conceived as "The Word of God" or "The Manifestation of Spirit" (Barth and Hegel, respectively) is more likely a difference

1. Feuerbach, Vorlesungen über das Wesen der Religion, Band 8, Otto Wigand, p. VIII. 1851 (Feuerbach's Werke) Leipzig; Feuerbach uses the term ironically in reverence to himself. Generally, Feuerbach is taken as an atheist by theologians and as a theologian or philosopher by Marxists.
2. Barth, Introduction to The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. XXVII.
3. ibid, p. XXVIII: That is, Barth thinks Feuerbach did not 'know' death and 'misunderstood' evil.

of starting points than necessary conclusions. Feuerbach's stated intention was to begin with "being itself, not the idea of being", "to posit the infinite in the finite." In his early writings Hegel had said that "love intuits the infinite", but the infinite cannot be carried in the vessel of objective faith.[1] There is a logical consistency in Feuerbach's refusal to apply reason to that which is primarily intuitive. In other words, a phenomenological approach to the 'feeling' of love in human experience is possible, and may imply 'infinite' characteristics of love itself, but rational analysis is necessarily limited to the characteristics which are observable in time and space, not in 'infinity'.[2] Thus, for Feuerbach, an analysis of the Incarnation as the bearer of corporate human intuition is as close as it is possible to get to rational discussion about 'the divine predicate'. However, Feuerbach was far too well-grounded in theology not to be aware of the transcendent ideas inherent in words like 'spirit', 'divinity', 'the infinite', 'immortality', and of course, 'love'. Although he attempted to reduce these qualities to human phenomenological attributes, he did not do so consistently or successfully enough to allay suspicion that he was a Hegelian theologian merely continuing Hegel in dialectical opposition to him.[3] Karl Marx, for example, sensed that Feuerbach might be a theologian in an atheist's disguise, especially since Feuerbach talked "too much about nature and not enough about politics".[4] As we have noted, Karl Barth was convinced that Feuerbach was the theologian who "let the cat out of the bag", urbi et orbi, about the anthropological implications of theology after Schleiermacher.[5]

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1. Hegel: Early Theological Writings (trans. Knox) op. cit. p. 253
2. In critique of Hegel, Feuerbach said, "Ohne Leib, kein Geist". Reason applied to spirit or mind alone is speculative fantasy.
3. "One doesn't continue Hegel except in opposing him". Henri Arvon, Ludwig Feuerbach ou la Transformation du Sacre, Paris, P.U.F. 1947, p. 24. Quoted by Wartofsky in Feuerbach, op. cit. p. 142
4. Marx in a letter to Arnold Ruge, Quoted by Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx, p. 10. cf. Theses VIII, XI "Theses on Feuerbach", original in Friedrich Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der Klassisschen deutschen Philosophie, Stuttgart, 1895.
5. Karl Barth in Introduction to The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. XXI

For better or worse, legitimately or illegitimately, Feuerbach has demonstrated that talk about humanity is one way to answer questions about God. The 'answer' may say less than we would like about the nature of God, but at least it acknowledges the limitations of human reason. Although 'intimations of immortality' may be gleaned from the images of religion, the image, qua image, is still an objectification of something subjective, something living. The quantification of the quality in the image, in terms of fixed attributes, must be recognized as inadequate. Although reason may help to clarify human feeling, feeling cannot be contained in rational categories. The images of religion, like the loves of humam beings, are always greater than the sum of their parts. However, rational descriptions of this "greater" which are alienated from human experience and absolutized outside space and time do no service either to God or to humanity. Although many of us would consider Feuerbach's reductions inappropriate (the essence of religion is "nothing but" the essence of mankind), we should admit the inappropriateness of the other extremes. (God is a verifiable object or an explicable subject). If the nature of God is present somehow in human religion, human images, human sacraments, human loves, and perhaps even human actions,[1] then that nature cannot be implied or made relevant apart from reference to human feelings and human experience. Such anthropocentrism or "anthropology" does not, per se, entail the negation of God.

(b) If love is the hidden but authentic content in the Incarnation of God into a man and representative of all humanity, what the image of the Incarnation says about humanity is nevertheless a dialectical way of speaking about God. Feuerbach's inversion of subject and predicate may be the negation of objective quantity, but it is the affirmation of substantive quality. The inversion

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1. Wartofsky thinks Feuerbach's notion of 'praxis' rests entirely within the imagination, a function of belief. I think the best clue, which I don't have space to follow, is Feuerbach's aphorism: "Work is worship."

of the Johannine statement "God is love", to become "love is God", is no threat to deity if the quality of love can be conceived as genuinely divine. The Incarnation, as an object of faith, an image created in the imagination, is not subject to rational quantification, but may be spoken of in terms of flexible attributes. The energy and relatedness of the image of God - become - man derives from a capacity for relation to all generations. If the image is quantified, once for all, in the ideology of, e.g. fourth-century North Africa or thirteenth-century Europe, the quality of the image suffers. But if the quality can be made substantive, with a built-in relationship to a developing human self-consciousness the image retains its vitality through history. The classical ideas of omnipotence and omniscience, for example, are quantitative attributes resting upon the concepts of infinite, hence inhuman, power and knowledge. But the ideas of love and suffering, represented in the Incarnation, are qualitative attributes which retain their relatedness to forms of human love and suffering succeeding in different generations. 'Untouchable' quantifications of God elevate God above the criteria of historical criticism, but they sacrifice the intimate connection between the divine and the human which is present in the gospels.

Thus, the doctrine of the impassibility of God is called into question by the Incarnation itself. The very relatedness of God to humanity is dependent upon Christ's integration of human suffering. Similarly, the idea of love as a Christian ethical principle is dependent upon the intimacy of divine and human loves. In respect to both suffering and love, the Incarnation proclaims the good news that there is no qualitative difference. God's suffering is human suffering; God's love is not essentially different from human love.

(c) The impact of (a) and (b) above on Christian theology, particularly in reference to Christology, suggests a view of the Incarnation which reveals both the nature of God and the potential,

or highest, nature of humanity.[1] In order for the predicate of love to make sense as a genuine substantive quality of God, we must be able to conceive of a God whose programme of revelation is as concerned with the disclosure of human possibilities as with the unveiling of his own true nature. Or perhaps more characteristically, we must be able to conceive of a God who discloses his own nature as an integral, implicit, and intimate function of the human being's capacity to understand and actualize himself in a greater community. Jesus' reference to "those who have ears to hear" may be a reminder that the love of God is most often revealed to lovers of people.

Perhaps just as "one cannot continue Hegel except in opposing him", neither can one continue Feuerbach's substantive predicates of humanity except by applying them, dialectically, to God. "The divinity of the attribute" is Feuerbach's way of speaking about the divine quality of humanity. But once we realize that the Incarnation really does overcome the opposition between the divine and the human, really does posit the infinite in the finite, really does demonstrate a God who is "a being of the heart", of suffering, of love, then such a being need not remain in the limited guise of human imagination. If we do understand divine love because we ourselves love, and comprehend the meaning of the Cross because we ourselves suffer, we can 'intuit' the identification of God with humanity. Of course, the identification is of quality, not of quantity, but "love intuits the infinite." And, just perhaps, there need be no contradiction between faith and love.

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1. John McIntyre, On the Love of God, op. cit. p. 182: "In the person of Jesus Christ there takes place the revelation, not only of God, but also of man." Karl Barth, also, has made this point repeatedly.

8. Summary and Implications

Despite Feuerbach's historical association with 'atheism' (not the least of which is the 'Death of God' movement of the nineteen-sixties), he has left a legacy to theology which calls it to justify itself before the world.

> Thus what theology and philosophy have held to be God, the Absolute, the Infinite, is not God; but that which they have held not to be God is God: namely, the attribute, the quality, whatever has reality. Hence he alone is the true atheist to whom the predicates of the divine being, - for example, love, wisdom, justice, - are nothing; not he to whom merely the subject of these predicates is nothing...
>
> The idea of God is dependent on the idea of justice, of benevolence; a God who is not benevolent, not just, not wise, is no God; but the converse does not hold. The fact is not that a quality is divine because God has it, but that God has it because it is in itself divine: because without it God would be a defective being. Justice, wisdom, in general every quality which constitutes the divinity of God, is determined and known by itself independently, but the idea of God is determined by the qualities which have thus been previously judged to be worthy of the divine nature; only in the case in which I identify God and justice, in which I think of God immediately as the reality of the idea of justice, is the idea of God self-determined.[1]

The quality of justice, which, with the quality of love, is stressed in the above extract, is no mere example. Belief in God is not what Feuerbach wishes to combat; atheism is not what he wishes to affirm. Deeper is the issue of the inherent quality in human love and human justice. More pressing is the feeling in common human experience which declares that love and justice are worth pursuing on earth, not to be subordinated to speculative doctrines of God, professions of faith, and systems of theology. The concept of divinity, he has suggested, is not approachable by the rational intellect, but only in terms of human experience and human value. Justice and love are two of these values, which, if not pursued on earth, hardly have relevance to heaven.

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1. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 21

One must be cautious in assessing what the concept of divinity meant for Feuerbach. There are numerous possibilities, deriving from his conflicting emphases and aphorisms. At the end of the day, I would suggest, he saw divine quality in human feeling and love, which prevented him from making that quality lesser by objectifying it, as so many others had done before him. Keeping the 'image', perhaps he salvaged it from objective obsolescence. He did say that one's presumption in identifying the objective characteristics of God in fact elevates one above the object described. What he never said was that any individual human being, nor the human species in its present form, could be responsible for all the love, wisdom, and beauty in the universe. He began with Dasein, being here and now, not with the idea or speculation of being in its ontological mode. Hegel had already tried that, and his system, for Feuerbach, was less than satisfactory. But to begin with being here and now is not a negation of absolute being; it is only to admit that one does not have the appropriate data for meaningful inquiry. Perhaps, after all, to suggest that there is something 'infinite' and 'divine' about human experience is as much ontology as human beings have a right to deduce. Revelation, of course, would be a completely different subject, and it was not Feuerbach's.

A simpler, if not quite satisfactory, interpretation of Feuerbach's concept of divinity, also supportable from his writings, is that whether God exists or not is neither discernible nor important for human existence and human community. At any rate there is enough of the 'divine' in human feeling, human love, and human justice to be getting on with, and wasting time worshipping is time lost for the real job of the human species: fashioning a more equitable and just community. This second interpretation may complement the first. No interpretation of Feuerbach should be too simple.

Of many Feuerbachian and Hegelian ideas we must carry forward, I will try to list the most important as they relate to the concept

of love. Both the "spirit" (Geist) and "essence" (Wesen) of Christianity are constituted by human love. The "feeling" (Sinnlichkeit) of human experience is indispensable to the more mature and 'infinite' love which occurs when one 'I' encounters and identifies itself in another, a 'thou'. In this encounter and in the sharing of feeling there is a developing self-consciousness, which goes on to meet other 'I's and form community with them. There is depth in the encounter which human reason cannot deduce, but the feeling, the love, has been projected in the images of religion. The Christian image of a human, suffering God is the manifestation of a certain 'divinity' in the feeling and the love when one person genuinely encounters and identifies with another. This love cannot be commanded; it is spontaneous, even though it is commanded. It may not be conscious, for it begins wherever two persons meet. But when it does become a part of consciousness, it has the capacity to create greater community on many levels and in many forms.

Objectifications in religious consciousness, however, militate against this 'infinite' love, this 'divine' attribute of human nature, preventing genuine community. For this reason, there may arise a contradiction between faith and love insofar as loyalty to an imagined objective God takes precedence over genuine love and justice-creating activity on the human level. For example, belief in an impassible deity or an omnipotent being becomes a counterfeit expression of the truth in religion, making humans prefer an illusion, which is incapable of suffering, incapable of temporal limitation, to the genuine attributes of human being and human ideals.

The implication from the early Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach is that, when conceiving love in authentic terms for Christian theology, we must be careful not to divorce it from humanity. Love entails a depth which may even be material in quality. It contains a breadth which lends infinity to human feeling and it implies a height of divinity in all genuine benevolent passion. Thus, a God of love

cannot be remote from the human condition, from the predicates by which humans describe their feelings of love. If God loves, he also suffers; if he is infinite, he must also be related intimately to temporal existence.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DIVINE PASSION

Søren Kierkegaard: Love Through the Eyes of Faith

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TOPICAL SUMMARY

Søren Kierkegaard: Love Through the Eyes of Faith

As a fitting companion for Feuerbach, one could hardly suggest a more important writer on the subject of love than Soren Kierkegaard. Often stereotyped and misunderstood, both have exerted a diverse and extensive influence upon twentieth century thought. Contemporaries in an era of European upheaval and ferment, they both were constrained to analyze and comment upon the Christendom of their day. Supporting each rests a thorough study of Plato, Luther, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Schleiermacher, and Hegel. Both were particularly dissatisfied with the rational approach to religion (å la Kant), and by design or by coincidence, paralleled the early Hegel's attempt to extricate Christianity's implicit ethic from Kant's categorical imperative.[1] Neither Feuerbach nor Kierkegaard was willing to accept Hegel's dialectical system, although each was a master of dialectic. Human feeling (Feuerbach) and human passions (Kierkegaard) could not be contained or adequately described in a speculative assessment of the activity of absolute Geist. Both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard maintained a critical distance from the institutions of their day, and both died in penury.

The previous chapter noted Ludwig Feuerbach's assertion that there is a contradiction between faith and love. Soren Kierkegaard has tried to show not only that there is no contradiction, but also that love can only be authentic in intimacy with faith. This chapter will briefly outline Kierkegaard's concept of love in the context of faith.

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1. Four books outlining much of the transition from Kant to Kierkegaard might instructively be studied in chronological order: Immanuel Kant, Metaphysic of Ethics (1796) E.T. J.W. Semple, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1869; G.W.F. Hegel, Early Theological Writings (1796-1800) E.T. T.M. Knox, University of Chicago Press, 1948; Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, (1841) E.T. Marian Evans, Harper, New Yord, 1957; Soren Kierkegaard, Either/Or, (1843) E.T. Vol. I. David Swenson; Vol. II, Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, 1944.

I. Kierkegaard's Synthesis of Faith and Love

1. Background

Kierkegaard was born in 1813 and spent most of his life in his native Denmark. It is well known that much of his career is related in some way with his romance and engagement with a woman called Regine Olsen. For reasons known only to himself, but probably concerned with a conflict between Kierkegaard's conceptions of divine and human loves, he broke his engagement. Immediately thereafter he journeyed to Berlin, arriving coincidentally in 1841 (the year of the publication of Feuerbach's Das Wesen des Christentums). We can only surmise the impact of the Berlin academic climate, coupled with the intensity of the feeling arising from the loss of Regine, from the topics considered in Kierkegaard's first works. In 1843 appeared three books demonstrating Kierkegaard's tremendous energy and creativity. They also demonstrated a certain capacity for the sublimation of his erotic love as theology. Either/Or, Repetition, and Fear and Trembling all contain a hidden agenda revealing Kierkegaard's attempt to come to terms with his renunciation of romance. They are also a significant attempt to come to terms with Kantian ethics, Hegel's system, and the apparent contradiction between faith and love, particularly in relation to marriage.[1]

For a time Kierkegaard hoped for some rapprochement with Regine. When she herself became engaged, and eventually married, to a man named Schlegel, Kierkegaard's writings took a different tone. Although he set himself to a more mature development of many of his early themes, his memory of his earthly beloved continued to haunt his writings, and he searched for a way in which the giddiness of romantic love might be transformed, with or without the beloved, into a love

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1. cf. Either/Or, Vol. II, "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage." op. cit. cf. also, Fear and Trembling, trans. Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press 1941,1954, which, in addition to the ambivalent story of Abraham and Isaac, also contains references to Agamemnon and Iphigenia, Agnes and the Merman, and Tobias and Sarah.

that is "eternal".

In addition to the works just cited, Kierkegaard's idea of love is primarily revealed in two other writings. The first is Philosophical Fragments or a Fragment of Philosophy, which was written during 1844, and Works of Love which was published in 1847. The first, like his ealier books, is pseudonymous, and the second is autographed. It is a hazardous task to unravel the 'real' Kierkegaard from his pseudonyms, but insofar as there is a consistency between those he signed and those he signed in the names of others, we have at least the basis of analysis. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that Kierkegaard was far from systematic, that his ideas underwent subtle (and not-so-subtle) changes during the course of his career, and that, like Feuerbach, he is often intentionally deceptive.

One other historical event in Kierkegaard's life may or may not be important for an essessment of his ideas of faith and love. On Easter in 1848 he had a religious experience which appeared to change the tone of his serious writings from that which "calls attention" to that which is intentionally persuasive.[1] Notwithstanding such an experience, it is Kierkegaard's works before 1848 that provide the ground for assessment of his concept of love. Of course, for such as the genius of Kierkegaard, "the moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on..."[2] For better or for worse, what Kierkegaard said at the age of thirty cannot be totally reconciled with what he said at the age of thirty-seven. Nevertheless, what he said in the intensity of his earthly melancholy, his human struggles with human love, and his search for an eternal passion, is what, most of all, has commended him to history.

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1. The later Kierkegaard is perhaps revealed in the final part of Sickness Unto Death, part of which was written before his Easter experience, and part after. Kierkegaard, Sickness Unto Death (first published 1849), trans. Walter Lowrie, published together with Fear and Trembling, Princeton University Press, 1941,1954. p. 133.
2. cf. Kierkegaard's "Epilogue" to Fear and Trembling. "He who reached faith...does not remain standing at faith, yea, he would be offended if anyone were to say this of him, just as the lover would be indignant if one said that he remained standing at love, for he would reply, "I do not remain standing, by any means, my whole life is in this." p. 131.

2. God the Absolute

Soren Kierkegaard's concept of God, simply stated, is absolute love. Such a deity is "incommensurable with the whole of reality", completely beyond the attempts of reasonable description and definition. In Kierkegaard's preface to Works of Love, he makes the careful distinction between the absolute character of love, and expressions of love which are capable of human mediation. "That which in its vast abundance is essentially inexhaustible is also essentially indescribable in its smallest act, simply because essentially it is everywhere wholly present and essentially cannot be described."[1] For Kierkegaard, the recognition of God as love can be an observation of a person who has not yet experienced faith, nor known what it is to love in the context of faith. In Fear and Trembling, the 'author', Johannes de Silentio, is able to recognize "the love of God", but he is not able to believe completely.

> I am unable to make the movements of faith, I cannot shut my eyes and plunge confidently into the absurd, for me that is an impossibility...but I do not boast of it. I am convinced that God is love, this thought has for me a primitive lyrical validity. When it is present to me, I am unspeakably blissful, when it is absent, I long for it more vehemently than does the lover for his object; but I do not believe, this courage I lack. For me the love of God is, both in a direct and in an inverse sense, incommensurable with the whole of reality.[2]

The author proceeds to examine the faith of Abraham in willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham is the "knight of faith" who is able to live "by virtue of the absurd", to make "the movement of infinity" without losing the finite.[3] The absurdity of giving oneself away, in assurance that only by doing so may the self be retained, is the mark of the "paradox". Such discloses that only through faith is it possible to comprehend the nature of an absolute, loving deity who makes an absolute demand on the individual. The

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1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, (1847) trans. Howard and Edna Hong, Harper New York, 1962 p. 19
2. Fear and Trembling, op. cit. p.44
3. ibid, p. 46; Note that S.K.'s "movement of infinity" is remarkably dialectical in view of Hegel's and Feuerbach's "infinite in the finite", (cf. chapter 1, above)

"absolute relation of the individual to the Absolute" is that which posits the universal in subjection to the particular. That is, the individual who has faith is placed in such a wholly unique relation to God that the 'sin' which is disclosed through ethics (the individual's subjection to the universal, the community.), may be exactly what God demands. In the background of this is Kierkegaard's own 'sin' of jilting Regine. On another level, the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is the story of Kierkegaard's sacrifice of Regine, his most pricely treasure. The nature of the demand of the Absolute is thus placed in another context than the sphere of the humanly ethical.[1]

In response to the demand of the Absolute, Kierkegaard develops something called "a teleological suspension of the ethical". Abraham's 'ethic' "is not melerly the most paradoxical that can be thought, but so paradoxical that it cannot be thought at all".[2] Where thinking stops, faith begins. Kant's attempt to speak of ethics in terms of duty is valid only from the assumption that "the universal is higher than the particular". But if the individual, in relation to God, the Absolute, becomes thereby "higher than the universal", ethics based on the rational idea of duty is completely inapplicable. Otherwise, 'duty' determined rationally becomes the tautology which defines God. Since this duty is derived from rational metaphysics, it is not absolute. Only a duty conceived as "the precise expression for God's will",[3] which is able to include paradox, the elevation of the particular above the universal, is appropriate to faith. Thinking is done in terms of universals, and "the ethical is the universal." By being ethical one comes into contact with other humans, but not into relation with God. The 'divine' is not another word for 'the universal'. A difficult passage in Fear and Trembling

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1. S.K. was at this time a "knight of infinite resignation", not able to claim the 'finite' Regine in faith. He saw his duty to God as contrary to his duty to Regine, and could not marry her without the fear that his love for God would be in jeopardy. Later, he repented his action.
2. Fear and Trembling, op. cit, p. 67
3. ibid, p. 70

gives us insight into Kierkegaard's conception of an absolute duty which is beyond ethics, corresponding to absolute deity.

> Duty becomes duty by being referred to God, but in duty itself I do not come into relation with God. Thus it is a duty to love one's neighbour but in performing this duty I do not come into relation with God but with the neighbour whom I love. If I say then in this connection that it is my duty to love God, I am really uttering only a tautology, inasmuch as "God" is in this instance used in an entirely abstract sense as the divine, i.e. the universal, i.e. duty. So the whole human race is rounded off completely like a sphere, and the ethical is at once its limit and its content. God becomes an invisible vanishing point, a powerless thought, his power being only in the ethical which is the content of existence. If in any other way it might occur to any man to want to love God in any other sense than that here indicated, he is romantic, he loves a phantom which, if it merely had the power of being able to speak, would say to him, "I do not require your love. Stay where you belong."[1]

The interpretation of this passage is of the utmost importance in discovering what Kierkegaard means by the Absolute, and what is really his view of ethics. From the passage itself, Kierkegaard is so ambivalent that it is difficult to decide whether he is criticizing or defending Kant. The clue, I believe, is the remark that duty is "precisely the expression for God's will".[2] From this quotation, and Kierkegaard's use of the idea of duty in Works of Love, one must conclude that in the above passage, "duty itself" is not the real duty which only "becomes duty be being referred to God". His idea of duty is completely contained in the first sentence. The rest of the passage is a facetious rendering of Kant, emphasizing a sort of 'hermeneutic circle' in the sphere of the ethical. The result of this 'sphere' is that God cannot be loved. Thus the ethical sphere is inadequate. One cannot come into relation with the Absolute by being ethical. God does require the love of humanity, but this cannot be implied from ethics "in the sense of morality".

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1. Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, p. 78
2. ibid. p. 70

An ethic grounded upon the idea of universals is sufficient for itself, with the universal good equated with 'the divine'. But since such an ethic is dependent upon thinking, the idea of an absolute is limited to the field of thought. Abraham's faith, however, was so paradoxical that it could not be thought, and requires another "impossible" conception of an absolute. From the bounds of reason alone, either an absolute is the greatest thing that can be thought, or else it is a mere "phantom" which, if it existed, could not come into relation with an individual in any case. Such a 'God' would not require the human's love, and would be like the capricious gods of the Greeks (Kierkegaard adapts from Plato here), so absolute that they have everything they need, thus have no need of human love. But Kierkegaard's "Absolute" is supremely relational.

The complexity of Kierkegaard's thought and language is now beginning to emerge. When he refers to "the Absolute" he means something beyond the essentially rational absolute of Hegel. When he talks about "duty", he is referring to a sort of duty which can only be construed in connection with "the will of God". By ethics, he means a mode of behavious which is not ultimately conditioned by universal principles.[1] By faith, he is talking about a relation of the individual which places the particular higher than the universal, an absolute relation to the Absolute. And when Kierkegaard speaks of love, he means an absolute essence which is <u>essentially</u> unthinkable and indescribable.

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1. Kierkegaard does indeed use the idea of ethics most often "in the sense of morality". (cf. <u>Fear and Trembling</u> p. 70) But it is clear from his argument that true ethics is only derived from the sense in which the individual is related to God by faith, not the sense in which the individual is related to a community (the universal). This whole argument resembles in many respects Hegel's early attempt to go beyond Kant in "The Spirit of Christianity", although it is not obvious that Kierkegaard knew the work. The problem of faith in relation to ethics is probably mediated for S.K. by Strauss, Feuerbach, and Lessing.

3. The Incarnation

The starting point for an understanding of Kierkegaard's idea of love, 'indescribable' though it may be, is intimately connected with his concept of God. We have seen above that Kierkegaard insists on an idea of deity which is absolute, capable of making supra-ethical demands of an absolute nature, but who still needs human love. The idea of an 'Absolute' must somehow be conceived in such a way that both absoluteness and relatedness are preserved in God. Reason cannot do this; only through "the eyes of faith" is such a conception 'possible'.

(1) The Context of Revelation

The concept of revelation is explored in Kierkegaard's book Philosophical Fragments or a Fragment of Philosophy. The question he asks is, "Can an absolute deity be revealed through human intercourse, human teaching?" In this book Kierkegaard's Master's thesis, "The Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates", becomes resource material. Through a dialectical critique, Kierkegaard takes as his opponents all the Hegelians - left, right, and centre (particularly Feuerbach, cf. below.)[1] Kierkegaard adapts (in a certain sense) Plato's argument that learning is latent in the human intellect and the 'teacher' does not really teach, but merely acts as a midwife of truth which is already present.[2] But learning itself must come from another source than the human teacher. Between humans, says Kierkegaard, the maieutic relationship is the highest possible relation. If the project is to discover Truth (the absolute sort), it cannot be implanted by a human teacher. "Begetting is reserved

1. Kierkegaard's mention of his opponents is indirect, ironic, and often sarcastic. For example, "It has never yet been known to fail that one fool when he goes astray, takes several others with him." Philosophical Fragments, page 14. Generally he criticizes everyone who claims to understand "The System" and "go beyond it". Specifically, Strauss, Feuerbach, and Martinsen, at least, receive his veiled criticism.
2. Plato, the Meno, demonstrates that a slave boy has geometry latent within. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, p. 11.

for the God alone.[1] "If the learner is to acquire the Truth, the Teacher must bring it to him; and not only so, but he must also give him the condition necessary for understanding it."[2] That is, what is not 'there' cannot be 'delivered'. If there is such a thing as absolute Truth, it is not limited to time; thus for it to become conscious in the knower, there must be a point at which the eternal enters into time, while at once making itself discernible. It is not enough for the infinite to be posited in the finite; it must also be able to provide the condition in the subject by which it may be understood. "The temporal point of departure is nothing, for as soon as I discover that I have known the Truth from eternity without being aware of it, the same instant this moment of occasion is hidden in the Eternal, and so incorporated with it that I cannot even find it so to speak, even if I sought it; because in my eternal consciousness there is neither here nor there, but only an ubique et nusquam."[3] For Kierkegaard the point at which the eternal enters into time is of utmost significance. This point he calls the Moment.[4]

If God is to create Truth which is available to human understanding, it must be through a direct revelation of himself. But this is, apparently, impossible since God is infinitely greater than humankind. A direct encounter cannot be achieved through human efforts, because human mediation is operative only within the bounds of the rational; at best it is the Socratic midwifery. Thus if any 'learning' about God, the radically supra-rational Absolute, is to occur, it must be at God's initiative, not from the human side. Sin has brought a radical disjunction between the human and

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1. Philosophical Fragments, p. 13
2. ibid p. 17
3. Philosophical Fragments, p. 15-16; This quotation may be a critique of Feuerbach's attempt to posit the infinite in the finite through the unconscious image of the Incarnation. Kierkegaard seems to be saying that even if love is revealed via the Incarnation as eternal, this is "nothing" if it cannot be immediately known. (The "nothing" may be an ironic use of Feuerbach's "nothing but".) cf. also, Feuerbach, The Essence Christianity, p. 50: "ex nihilo nihil fit."
4. Philosophical Fragments, p. 16 "The Moment" is a concept which cannot be briefly explained, and which would demand greater space for exposition than is here available. It concerns three things: the appearance of the eternal in time; the Incarnation as an event; and the appropriation of this event, in faith, by the individual.

the divine, so that the human no longer has the capacity to understand even that Truth which is inherent in the fact of creation.[1] The human must be recreated before he can be 'taught', and this is something that no human being can do for another. This recreation of the human by God is essentially a "coming into existence" from an antecedent state which is tantamount to non-being.[2] How this recreation, this "new birth" occurs, is the revelation of the 'character' of the Absolute.

(2) God the Servant

If God is to appear as a "Teacher" who imparts "Truth", while at the same time providing the condition for understanding it, he must do so in a manner which is "creative". God can only reveal the Truth, himself in fact, to humankind by becoming one among them. In a famous analogy, (which to be appreciated must be duplicated in full), Kierkegaard gives us the basic ingredients of his concept of God, the manner of God's revelation, and the ground of his idea of ethics, combined. Or, in other words, he gives us the nature of divine love and the precept for human love made visible to the eyes of faith in an absolute deity who "must therefore appear in the form of a servant".

> Suppose then a king who loved a humble maiden. The heart of the king was not polluted by the wisdom that is loudly enough proclaimed; he knew nothing of the difficulties that the understanding discovers in order to ensnare the heart, which keep the poets so busy, and make their magic formulas necessary. It was easy to realize his purpose. Every statesman feared his wrath and dared not breathe a word of displeasure; every foreign state trembled before his power and dared not omit sending ambassadors with congratulations for the nuptials; no courtier grovelling in the dust dared wound him, lest his own head be crushed. Then let the harp be tuned, let the songs of the poets begin to sound, and let all be festive while love celebrates its triumph. For

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1. Philosophical Fragments, p. 18.
2. "Coming into existence" is an ambivalent and dialectical term for Kierkegaard. Not only does the individual come into existence through the Moment, but for the individual, the eternal comes into existence through faith. Compare Feuerbach:"...man comes into being, he is not created. Only once he has come into being, can he create himself, does he become a product of human knowledge." (Posthumous Aphorisms)

> love is exultant when it unites equals, but it is triumphant when it makes that which was unequal equal in love. - Then there awoke in the heart of the king an anxious thought; who but a king who thinks kingly thoughts would have dreamed of it! He spoke to no one about his anxiety; for if he had, each courtier would doubtless have said: "Your majesty is about to confer a favor upon the maiden, for which she can never be sufficiently grateful her whole life long." This speech would have moved the king to wrath, so that he would have commanded the execution of the courtier for high treason against the beloved, and thus he would in still another way have found his grief increased. So he wrestled with his troubled thoughts alone. Would she be happy in the life at his side? Would she be able to summon confidence enough never to remember what the king wished only to forget, that he was king and she had been a humble maiden? For if this memory were to waken in her soul, and like a favored lover sometimes steal her thoughts away from the king, luring her reflections into the seclusion of a secret grief; or if this memory sometimes passed through her soul like the shadow of death over the grave: where would then be the glory of their love? Then she would have been happier had she remained in her obscurity, loved by an equal, content in her humble cottage; but confident in her love, and cheerful early and late. What a rich abundance of grief is here laid bare, like ripened grain bent under the weight of its fruitfulness, merely waiting the time of the harvest, when the thought of the king will thresh out all its seed of sorrow! For even if the maiden would be content to become as nothing, this could not satisfy the king, precisely because he loved her, and because it was harder for him to be her benefactor than to lose her. And suppose she could not even understand him? For while we are thus speaking foolishly of human relationships, we may suppose a difference of mind between them such as to render an understanding impossible. What a depth of grief slumbers not in this unhappy love, who dares to rouse it! However no human being is destined to suffer such a grief; him we may refer to Socrates, or to that which in a still more beautiful sense can make the unequal equal.[1]

The analogy demonstrates the 'anxiety' of God as the Absolute, the Eternal, which steeps him in a "kingly grief" that his love for his beloved might be resented. The love of an infinite for the finite could only cause offence, could only seem patronizing. Love's greatest triumph is the transcendence of like's attraction for like, so that even unequals may be united.[2] But while it may

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1. Philosophical Fragments, pp. 32-34 Of course, Kierkegaard is here describing his own struggle to love God, as well as God's struggle to love him. We note his alter ego, "loved by an equal, content in 'her' humble cottage; but confident in 'her' love, and cheerful early and late." The "maiden" is not Regine, but himself, as well as all humanity. Kierkegaard is still a "knight of infinite resignation", on the way to becoming a "knight of faith". But he is definitely not "speaking foolishly of human relationships". The whole point is that the beloved cannot "understand" the lover, who is God.
2. The attraction of 'like for like' is an idea of Plato's, revised by Hegel and Feuerbach to yield the theory of self-consciousness developing in the encounter between I and Thou. Kierkegaard obviously wants to "go beyond" this to an attraction between unequals. Love would thus be not merely "exultant", but "triumphant".

be possible for the infinite to love the finite, the finite does not necessarily find it easy to love the infinite. The alienation stems from the finite, the human, but it must be overcome by the infinite, the divine, if a real love is to be possible.

In the argument which follows the analogy, Kierkegaard dismisses Feuerbach's solution to the dilemma: "The union might be brought about by an elevation of the learner."[1] But "the divine love is that unfathomable love which cannot rest content with that which the beloved might in his folly prize as happiness."[2] If the "misunderstanding" between the king and the maiden is merely covered over with the joy the maiden finds in being raised to the status of the king, it would be a "nothing" in terms of actual reconciliation. The beloved might be made happy, but the happiness would be a deception of her own heart.[3] (Feuerbach, of course, had asserted that "God is a being of the heart", and Kierkegaard facetiously replies that God could not let the human heart be involved in vanity, "nothing", and self-deception, even if such deception might satisfy the "maiden".)

Kierkegaard also dismisses the solution offered by pietism: "The union might be brought about by the God's showing himself to the learner and receiving his worship, causing him to forget himself over the divine apparition. Thus the king might have shown himself to the maiden in all the pomp of his power...making her forget herself in worshipful admiration."[4] This might satisfy the maiden, but "it could not satisfy the king, who desired not his own glorification, but hers."[5]

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1. Philosophical Fragments, p. 35. Feuerbach, indeed, suggested the King-subject analogy. (cf. below), and The Essence of Christianity, p. 50 (op. cit.)
2. ibid.
3. ibid, p. 36 S.K. has Feuerbach in mind, but it is also a judgment on eros generally.
4. ibid; Kierkegaard criticizes not only left Hegelianism, but right Hegelians, too.
5. ibid.

The solution to the king's dilemma implies, of course, the Incarnation. God must actually become human, sharing the human situation, encountering the maiden in a form which she recognizes and by which she will not be "offended". Or, in other words, there must be a way by which the eternal can enter into and exist in time. "In order that the union may be brought about, the God must therefore become the equal of such a one, and so he will appear in the likeness of the humblest...the God will therefore appear in the form of a servant."[1] If God is "the Absolute", his love must be capable of overcoming the alienation (sin in fact) by which the maiden is rendered incapable of 'understanding' her lover. Therefore Kierkegaard posits an 'omnipotent love' which is able to reveal itself to humanity in a form by which "the condition" for its apprehension is also established. "For this is the unfathomable nature of love, that it desires equality with the beloved, not in jest merely, but in earnest and truth. And it is the omnipotence of the love which is so resolved that it is able to accomplish its purpose..."[2] In order to overcome the "offence" the king must be able to actually be as the maiden. He cannot simply assume the disguise of an equal, as a human king might. The identification must be total. Only a love which is 'omnipotent' could accomplish such a task, achieving complete identity with the human condition.

> Therefore the God must suffer all things, endure all things...He must suffer hunger in the desert, he must thirst in the time of his agony, he must be forsaken in death, absolutely like the humblest - behold the man! His suffering is not that of his death, but this entire life is a story of suffering; and it is love that suffers, the love which gives all is itself in want.[3]

We note in the above quotation that Kierkegaard keeps the word "absolutely" even as he is describing the passibility of God.

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1. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, p. 39
2. ibid
3. ibid, p. 40

This is consistent with his radical idea of "the Absolute", made available to human understanding only through an absolute, "omnipotent" love. The concept is a dialectical rendering of absolute deity in the form used by St. Bernard, which Feuerbach had criticized: "Impassibilis est Deus, sed non incompassibilis, cui proprium est misereri semper et parcere." (God cannot suffer but he is not incompassionate, for his character is always to have mercy and pardon.)[1] Kierkegaard realized, like Feuerbach, that such a God could not identify with the human condition. Whereas Feuerbach dispensed with the notion of God as an absolute deity, Kierkegaard attempts to show that he can be, indeed must be, absolutely omnipotent in love (paradoxical though this may seem). God must be able to suffer, he must be able to completely identify himself with the human condition, if the alienation between the Absolute and the conditional, the infinite and the finite, the eternal and time, the divine and the human, is to be overcome. But the "offence" is not overcome by God's sheer power; Kierkegaard suggests another kind of omnipotence, only by which "the condition" for the apprehension of Truth is established. The unequal is rendered equal. Love between the infinite and the finite becomes possible; a reciprocal, I-thou relationship replaces the subject-king relationship. For Kierkegaard there is no doubt:"...it is love that suffers, the love which gives all is itself in want." Only by means of an omnipotent love which "absolutely" identifies with the human condition is God able to break the alienation which has resulted from sin. Indeed, God's absoluteness, his "unfathomable" character, his eternal being which enters and exists in time, cannot be separated from his quality of omnipotent,

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1. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Sup. Cant. Sermo 26, quoted by Feuerbach in The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 54; (comment above, Ch. 1)
2. It is not obvious in S.K.'s analogy of the king and the maiden that the "offence" might be caused by sin. The necessity for sin to play a significant role in S.K.'s idea of the Incarnation and Atonement highlights an emphasis upon The Fall. cf. Philosophical Fragments, pp 18-19: "The learner has himself forfeited the condition"...for understanding the Truth.

supremely relational, love.

Thus the Incarnation reveals the only "Teacher" who is able to create both "Truth" and "the condition "for its understanding. Whereas human teachers are only able to 'deliver' learning in a maieutic sense, God's love "goes beyond" the Socratic ideal. The particular is place in absolute relation to the Absolute; the alienation between the Teacher and learner is broken, and a "new birth" is made possible as the individual encounters a God who not only is love but who also may be loved. But Kierkegaard's dialectical interpretation of the Moment in which the eternal comes to rest in time goes even further. God is not only revealed as love, breaking the barriers which prevent the human's love for God in return, but the Moment also discloses the 'how' of the human's love for his fellows.

The Incarnation reveals a God who is the eminent ground of all love, and who requires a "like for like" response from human beings. The inherent principle of the love disclosed, according to Kierkegaard, is that "love does not alter the beloved, it alters itself." Just as this kind of love is shown to the world by God, it is also a just requirement of the human's love for his neighbour. Omnipotence is consummated precisely in God's omnipotent desire to love his creatures, while at the same time preserving the creatures' freedom. In response to the love shown by God in Christ, the human selfish loves must be subjected to the "royal law" - that the neighbour shall be loved.

4. The Absolute Relational God

Before going on to see how Kierkegaard develops his idea of love in the context of faith, let us summarize the central concepts which appear so far in connection to 'God the Absolute' and 'God the Servant'.

(1) God's 'absoluteness' is not in question. As the story of Abraham and Isaac demonstrates, God may make absolute demands on the individual which are not to be construed in terms of rational ethics, universal duty, or any system which purports to distinguish between right and wrong according to universal or community ideals. Kierkegaard acknowledges that God's "omnipotent word" sustains the heavens and the earth "by fiat".[1] God is beyond all attempts of reason and dogmatic formulae; he is essentially "indescribable", unfathomable" in his absoluteness.

(2) God's love is an absolute quality derived from, and equated with, the nature of his absoluteness. It is not enough for him to merely demand obedience, as he did from Abraham. His creative capacity is able to create the conditions in which such obedience is possible; indeed, the obedience is transformed into something else, so that obedience loses its character as such for one who becomes a "knight of faith". How this occurs is not subject to rational analysis, but may only be 'understood' as God relates himself directly to the learner. At some point, a Moment, the eternal enters into existence "in virtue of the absurd"; the Truth of this entry, both as an event and as an event which is of utmost importance for the individual, can only be 'learned' through "the absolute relation of the individual to the Absolute". The juxtaposition of the terms "absolute" and "relation" gives us important insight into Kierkegaard's concept of God. Thus God's absoluteness is an absolute relation to humanity; God's love is 'omnipotent love' which is able to achieve his purpose without coercion, through creating the conditions for its understanding.[2]

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1. Philosophical Fragments, p. 40
2. There is a distinction here in S.K.'s understanding which may prevent a consistent absoluteness of deity from being conceived in relation to God's omnipotence. For S.K. the 'offence' remains, from the human side; but God relates himself absolutely to the human situation. Perhaps if God were absolutely relational there would be no offence; but from S.K.'s point of view there would also be no freedom.

(3) In and through the aspects of God's absolute being and his absolute love, revealed in the Incarnation, Kierkegaard accents the supremely relational character of the Christian God. "Only through placing God in particular relationship to the individual did our project go beyond Socrates."[1] By implication, the project also 'goes beyond' Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, and doxological credal formulae of classical theology.

> To sustain the heavens and the earth by the fiat of his omnipotent word, so that if this word were withdrawn for the fraction of a second the universe would be plunged into chaos - how light a task compared with bearing the burden that mankind might take offence when one has been constrained by love to become its saviour![2]

Classical theology which stresses God's power to the exclusion of his love, Kierkegaard implies, is misdirected. Christianity portrays a God who so relates himself to humankind that he must "make experience of all things" - including the depths of human suffering. For Kierkegaard, a God who suffers is not a 'weak' deity; rather the suffering as, in identity with, a human, demonstrates God's omnipotent love, and it is the credibility which overcomes alienation, the "offence", making "that which was unequal equal in love". The suffering is the "triumph" of divine love.

"Love does not alter the beloved, it alters itself." With this reinterpretation of the Incarnation Kierkegaard recalled the near-forgotten origins of a "Christendom" so entangled with doctrine that the validity of its demand upon human action had become eclipsed. Kierkegaard's supremely relational, yet unquestionably absolute concept of deity thus precedes certain themes of what in our century has become known as 'process theology'. Despite Kierkegaard's

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1. Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 127
2. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, p. 40
3. cf. Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, op. cit. (introduction). Of course there are marked differences in Kierkegaard's idea of a relative absolute which do not necessarily complement, for example, Hartshorne's interpretation. Nevertheless, Kierkegaard's God is a relational deity, far removed from the Absolute of conception generally. For the difference between the Absolute of Kierkegaard and that of Hegel, cf. Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. pp. 96-97 (note).

emphatic assertions about the absolute character of God and his absolute demand upon human behaviour, the absoluteness is revealed as a love which is 'absolutely' relational. It produces the conditions for faith in the individual, and entices it forth by overcoming all alienation. Thus "the omnipotence of love" becomes the essential unifying concept which underlies Kierkegaard's 'understanding' of God, faith, and ethics.

5. Faith and God's Love

The incarnation of God as a completely human being is called by Kierkegaard the "absolute paradox". Through this movement by God towards humankind, and indeed towards the particular individual, the "absolute unlikeness" between human beings and God is abolished. At God's initiative a relationship of "absolute likeness" now exists. But "the eyes of faith" are required for appreciation.[1] The "condition" for faith is provided by God himself; and faith, says Kierkegaard, is the only appropriate response to the infinite movement of God toward humankind. In what appears to be a related paradox, Kierkegaard tells us that "the highest passion is faith".[2] To speak of faith as a passion, although far from doctrinal rationalism, is yet consistent with Luther's point of view:

> For the inward man, who by faith is created in the likeness of God, is both joyful and happy because of Christ in whom so many benefits are conferred upon him, and therefore it is his one occupation to serve God joyfully and for naught, in love that is not constrained.[3]

Although Luther detects no "paradox" in faith, the Reformer does identify an intimate relationship between faith and love. In various interpretations, this relationship has been asserted in

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1. Reference to "the eyes of faith" appear frequently in Philosophical Fragments (cf.pp.80,87)
2. Fear and Trembling, p. 131
3. Martin Luther, "Treatise on Christian Liberty" Classics of Protestantism, p. 53 Philosophical Library, ed. Ferm, New York, 1959.

our century by, for example, Anders Nygren and Emil Brunner. The essential point stressed in Kierkegaard's thought is that faith, per se, is not a rational matter. Like love, it is on a different plane from reason. It is a "passion" in fact, not subject to rational categories. Similarly, with regard to the concept of feeling, Feuerbach had stressed that it is improper to apply logical categories to what is irrational. To the end of setting faith apart, a passion comparable to love but not to reason, Kierkegaard applied a dialectical interpretation to the 'feeling' of Schleiermacher and Feuerbach. Faith is not opposed to love, as Feuerbach was forced to assert. But neither is it subject to Kant's categories or to Hegel's rational system. As we observed in Chapter I, feeling (Sinnlichkeit) was Ludwig Feuerbach's "principle of unity". Kierkegaard translates feeling as passion. "That in which all human life is unified is passion, and faith is a passion."[1] "Faith begins precisely where thinking leaves off."[2] "Faith is a miracle and yet no man is excluded from it."[3] For Kierkegaard faith is the feeling, indeed the love, that the beloved has for the primal lover. It is possible because the lover loves first, making possible the response of love in return.

Throughout Kierkegaard's writings it is evident that, even when he speaks most emphatically about faith, there is an implicit link with his concept of love. Both faith and love appear profoundly influenced by the mundane affection, its frustrations and ambivalence, of Soren for Regine. Upon breaking his engagement with her, he wrote about the "double movement of infinity" whereby a person is constrained to sacrifice worldly assurances, affections, and hopes in favour of a radically loyal relationship with God.[4] For him, the price of his love for "the eternal" meant the initial sacrifice

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1. Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, p. 76
2. ibid, p. 64
3. ibid p. 76
4. cf. Kierkegaard, Repetition.

of his love for the temporal.

In Fear and Trembling he repeatedly illustrated the radical nature of faith in connection to the ordinary loves of humanity. Authentic love must be different from the temporal passion of romance, so fraught with frustration, so self-absorbing, so changeable. In one illustration, he shows how authentic love and authentic faith require a similar irrational courage. In the story of Tobias and Sarah, from The Book of Tobit, he attempts to demonstrate that only with faith can human love be deemed victorious over death and temporality.[1] For Kierkegaard, the interplay between faith and love requires that all human love be set in the context of "the eternal". That is, God, who is love, who has demonstrated ultimate love in the Incarnation, who provides and sustains the conditions for faith, demands (or from a "knight of faith" elicits) a response of love from the beloved which is appropriate to the eternal nature of absolute, divine love. In Kierkegaard's terms, this means that God becomes the (consciously understood) "third person" in any relation between human beings which purports to call itself "love".

> However beautiful the love-relationship has been between two or more people, however complete all their enjoyment and all their bliss in mutual devotion and affection have been for them, even if all men have praised this relationship - if God and the relationship to God have been left out, then, Christianly understood, this has not been love but a mutual and enchanting illusion of love.[2]

This quotation illustrates Kierkegaard's critique of romantic love and mutual love, indeed even the "species love" of Feuerbach. For him it is faith, and the eyes of faith alone, which are able to set love in an eternal context. Although Kierkegaard states, as does Feuerbach, that "love is God", for Kierkegaard this love is radically different from what is ordinarily called love in human relationships. Kierkegaard is no universalist, despite his idea

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1. Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, p.111; The Book of Tobit, (Apocrypha) Chapters 7-10 esp.
2. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, trans. Howard & Edna Hong, Harper 1962, p. 113
3. ibid p. 124; cf. also Sickness Unto Death p. 258 - Human and divine love are different in quality.

of a relational deity. Unless God is 'seen' to constitute the truth of human relationships, then that truth is still alienated from human lovers. Although one cannot love God unless one loves his brother, one cannot love his brother, "Christianly understood", unless one loves God. Brotherly love is dependent first of all upon the recognition that God first loves humanity, first loved 'me'.

The paradigm for valid human love is contained in Kierkegaard's analogy of the king who loved the humble maiden. The king does not really require love from his beloved; he first of all determines to change himself so that his offering of love may be received and acceptable without causing offence. In the image of the Incarnation (the Moment), Kierkegaard finds not only the symbols for the character of God and of God's love, but also for the type of human love which is demonstrated as a model. The love disclosed is asked from all humanity in all relationships, and it cannot be understood adequately without reference to the Incarnation. The human being who would love his neighbour must be willing to make himself equal with his neighbour, in order that his love may be genuine. A patronizing love, 'from above', is not the love which is disclosed in the incarnation of God as a man. Neither is it the pseudo-love of the greater for the lesser, the rich for the poor, the powerful for the helpless. Here, perhaps, is the germ of Kierkegaard's often overlooked social consciousness, the inherent justice which accrues to a love in the light of the love of God. But only when faith begins to be understood ethically, for example in Works of Love, is this justice really apparent.

For Kierkegaard faith is a miracle, an absolute relation to the Absolute, a supremely subjective requisite for the understanding of love. In faith, properly, the language of subject-object disappears. The "Truth" cannot be discovered by positing objective criteria by which one may apprehend God. The difficulty of this

would make talk about faith impossible if it were not possible to use the language of analogy and paradox in such a way that reason points beyond the logical. Thus one cannot really say that faith is "a subjective relation to something objective" except insofar as the relation is understood analogically, the inadequacy of such language being acknowledged.

Faith is not properly construed by, or subject to, historical fact. Nevertheless, says Kierkegaard, faith must maintain certain objective beliefs. "When faith resolves to believe it runs the risk of committing itself to an error, but it nevertheless believes. There is no other road to faith."[1] Here we must entertain both a difference of, and a relation between, subjective faith, and objective belief. "Faith is not an act of will; for all human volition has its capacity within the scope of an underlying condition." This "condition" is God's gift; but "belief" (in the subject-object sense) is often an act of will. One must will to believe in love, even if one is not "a knight of faith".[2] Without such beliefs, one involves oneself in despair, closing oneself off from the possibility of faith.

Kierkegaard exegetes St. Paul's assertion that "love believes all things" (I Cor. 13:7) to stress the infinite hopefulness of Christianity over against nihilism, scepticism, and empiricism. "Love...can take upon itself the work of faith and hope and make them even more perfect."[3] This is possible precisely because love, like faith, is not founded upon any assured knowledge, but 'finds itself' in its vulnerability. In its intimate relation to faith,

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1. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p.103
2. This is Kierkegaard as the theologians' enigma, a nightmare for proper interpretation. Subjects and objects, in the context of faith, become something else, but must still be described in terms of subjects and objects. "The knight of infinite resignation" believes things in an objective sense, which may lead him to believe things in a subjective sense, so that he becomes a "knight of faith" in which subject and object disappear. cf. Fear and Trembling p. 44 f.
3. Works of Love, p. 213

"love believes all things and yet is never deceived" as it opens itself to deception and constantly involves itself in risk. Only by being vulnerable, says Kierkegaard in the language of paradox, is it possible "to assure oneself infinitely against every deception".[1] More terrible is "faith with reservations (a clear contradiction)".[2] Similarly, a love which is founded upon the supposed worth of the beloved, is a counterfeit love, for love is not conditioned by the values of the marketplace. Kierkegaard notes that a person might be so "knowledgeable" that he might believe and love "nothing" at all.[3]

God's love revealed in the Incarnation calls forth "an eternal like for like". As "the king" has made himself equal with "the maiden" he has overcome the inequality and the possible offence which could prohibit a reciprocal love. Thus God (the "king") establishes "the condition" for the human's love for God. But a <u>like</u> love is called forth from the beloved, which takes form not only as love for God, equivalent to faith, but also as a love for the neighbour which resembles the love shown by God. Such a love "does not alter the beloved, it alters itself."

Through God's love for humanity, humanity's love for God is rendered possible. If the human does not take offence at God's attempt to become its lover, then the human's love for God, in return, is the passion of faith. The transformation which results by virtue of faith appropriates (in some "indescribable" way) the divine love for the human's relations with his fellows. Optimally, such a love of the human for other humans resembles the character of the self-effacing love shown in God's love for humanity. The precept of love demonstrated by "God the servant" is thus both the establishment

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1. ibid, p. 221
2. ibid, p. 219
3. Note the ironic "nothing" - Kierkegaard's critique of Feuerbach's "love". <u>Works of Love</u>, pp. 219-222

of the condition for faith in "God the Absolute", and at the same time the revelation of the type of love by which the faithful human is to love other human beings.

Love revealed by faith is devoid of objective criteria in the form of knowledge. It finds its strength precisely in an ability to give itself away, to involve itself in risk, letting God who is love be the acknowledged "third person" in every human relationship. The indispensable principle in the divine revelation of love is love's altering of itself without changing the beloved, establishing the inherent grounds of justice which make love possible between equals. Divine love is not patronizing, but conforms itself in equality with the beloved; human love in the context of faith imitates the divine love in establishing the context of justice, equality, and reconciliation. Such a love is incarnated in the lives of human beings through no categorical imperative or ethical system, but only through the Moment of faith, the human's 'irrational' love for God, "the highest passion".

II. Self-love, Romantic Love, and Friendship

1. The Paradox of Self-love

Kierkegaard states that "man lives an undisturbed and self-centred life, until there awakens in him the paradox of self-love, in the form of love for another, the object of his longing."[1] For Kierkegaard, self-love, erotic love, and friendship are essentially the same until they are all transformed in the light of faith, and reinterpreted in the context of the "royal law"...the commandment to love God and the neighbour as oneself. Kierkegaard attributes a significant place to innate self-love, the development of which can result in an ethic appropriate to faith.

> Self-love lies as the ground for all love or else is the ground in which all love perishes; therefore if we conceive a religion of love, the religion need make but one assertion...the condition that man loves himself.[2]

We may note that Kierkegaard is interested in "a religion of love". Kierkegaard, however, does not find it necessary to dispense with faith in order to conceive such a religion. Neither must self-love necessarily result in an egocentric pietism or in the elevation of the individual to the status of the divine.[3]

It is clear from Luther's "Treatise on Christian Liberty" that the Reformer will not entertain the idea of a faithful love of self.

> We conclude, therefore, that a Christian man lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbour. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbour through love; by faith he is caught up beyond himself into God, by love he sinks down beneath himself into his neighbour...[4]

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1. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, p. 48 Note the comparison with Feuerbach's I-Thou theory; "paradox" is S.K.'s additional element.
2. ibid.
3. A comparison of Kierkegaard's view of self-love with Augustine, Luther, Hegel, and Feuerbach would indeed be interesting, but such is beyond the scope of this essay. Each contributes in some way to S.K.'s formulation, but his dialectical view of the self renders his view unique. Particularly, despite some similarities, his view differs decidedly from Augustine, due to S.K.'s emphasis upon the duty to love the neighbour. For Hegel self-love was "a word without meaning" cf. Hegel, Early Writings, op.cit. p.247
4. Luther, "Treatise on Christian Liberty", Classics of Protestantism, ed. Ferm, Philosophical Library, New York, 1959, p. 62

Kierkegaard, however, observes that self-love is a necessary condition for the love of neighbour, because the neighbour must be recognized as a self before he or she may be loved as oneself.

Kierkegaard seems to take the command to love the neighbour as the self (Mark 12:28-34) quite literally. The command to love God is prior, but love for God is not different from the "passion" of faith. Love for the neighbour depends upon the proper concept of self, in relation to God, so that, by faith both self and neighbour are loved in reference to God's prior love for humanity. Therefore, the self cannot simply be deleted, either in deference to God or to the neighbour. The neighbour is a "duplication" of oneself. There is, as Augustine held, no qualitative difference between the self and the neighbour. Under the authority of the royal law, they are equal: "As far as thought is concerned, the neighbour need not even exist."[1] Proper love for oneself is the same as proper love for one's neighbour. Just as God has demonstrated his identity with the human condition, the faithful is commanded to identify himself with his neighbour. Both justice and the nature of divine love hang in the balance.

With this concept of a "paradoxical" self-love we must notice that Kierkegaard's dialectic is once again at work. He conceives of an innate self-love which is either the ground of a "religion of love" or the ground by which all love perishes. The connection between self-love 'A' and self-love 'B' (to continue his distinction of Either/Or) is either positive or negative; there may or may not be a transition from one to the other. This connection is best represented in his own words:

> Self-love lies as the ground of love; but the paradoxical passion of self-love when at its highest pitch wills precisely its own downfall. This is also what love desires, so that these two are linked in mutual understanding in the passion of the moment, and this passion is love. Why should not the lover find this conceivable? But he who in self-love

1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 37

> shrinks from the touch of love can neither understand it nor summon the courage to venture it, since it means his downfall. Such is then the passion of love; self-love is indeed submerged but not annihilated;...this is love's temptation.[1]

In the above quotation, we observe that Kierkegaard's idea of self-love is not bad in itself. "At its highest pitch it wills its own downfall." In other words, selfhood understood through faith loses its absorption in itself. It becomes a passion which is equivalent to "the passion of love" - focussed not on itself, but on the eternal. Only by this release from bondage to itself does the self actually become a self, in the eternal sense. But without the 'courage' to make this movement of infinity, the self remains "in despair", absorbed in the finite, the temporal conception of itself, and thereby losing the infinite, eternal relation to itself, which can only be consummated through faith in God. Kierkegaard's "definition of faith", which appears at the end of his book Sickness Unto Death, is concerned precisely with the paradoxical search for the self: "By relating itself to its (true) self and by willing to be its (true) self, the self is grounded transparently in the Power which constituted it." [2]

The proper love of self is interpreted by the command to love the neighbour. "The command, like a pick, wrenches open the lock of self-love and thereby wrests it away from men."[3] Just as Jacob limped from struggling with God, self-love is broken by struggling with the command to love the neighbour. The "as yourself" in the command to love the neighbour presupposes that people love themselves, but also teaches proper self-love, which "is the difference of the eternal".[4] A person should love oneself "in the right way", that is, in faithful self-renunciation. "If anyone, therefore, refuses

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1. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, p. 59
2. Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death, op. cit. p. 262, inter alia
3. Works of Love, op. cit. p. 34
4. ibid p.35

to learn from Christianity how to love himself in the right way, he cannot love his neighbour either."[1] "The neighbour" becomes the reflexive 'tutor' for proper self-love. "You shall love yourself in the same way as you love your neighbour when you love him as yourself."[2] The key to this dialectic of self-love is Kierkegaard's assertion that one cannot love the neighbour, nor oneself, if an "exception" is made of either. Under the precept of the Incarnation, God's love effects its omnipotence by humbling itself, not by elevating the beloved. One 'neighbour' must not be elevated over others; oneself must not be elevated over the neighbour. The neighbour, according to the command of Christ, is 'identical' with the self. "To love oneself in the right way and to love one's neighbour correspond perfectly to one another; fundamentally they are one and the same thing."[3]

It is important that Kierkegaard's view of a self-effacing self-love be not understood as the negation of self or self-love. He was too aware of the I-thou epistemology of Hegel and Feuerbach to ignore the necessity for an adequate understanding of selfhood by "Christianity". Although he undoubtedly depended, to a great extent, upon Luther and Augustine for his concept of self, Kierkegaard's view is a dialectical one. He attempts to preserve the ideal of humility which is present in the Gospels and in the writings of Paul, while refusing to allow the resolution of the self to evolve into mysticism. In addition, his own search for selfhood in his struggles with earthly love, ambition, and his own genius, played no small part in the theological concept of self which is portrayed especially in Works of Love and Sickness Unto Death. His own melancholia and tendency toward martyrdom provided poignant insight into

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1. ibid p. 39 By 'loving oneself in the right way' Kierkegaard means that proper love of self can only arise through loving one's neighbour as a self, and by loving God as the 'third person' in the relationship, who is, in fact, the love with which the neighbour is loved.
2. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 39 (This, however, appears tautological.)
3. ibid.

the nihilistic and destructive effects of inadequate self-love.

> Whoever has any knowledge of men will certainly admit that whenever he has desired the capacity of moving others to relinquish self-love, he has also frequently been constrained to wish that it were possible to teach them to love themselves. When the activist wastes his time and powers in the service of vain, inconsequential accomplishments, is it not because he has not rightly learned how to love himself? When the frivolous person throws himself, almost like a nonentity, into the folly of the moment, is it not because he does not understand how to love himself rightly? When the melancholic dejectedly desires to be rid of life, of himself, is this not because he will not learn earnestly and rigorously to love himself? When a man surrenders himself to despair because the world or some person has left him faithlessly betrayed, what then is his fault (his innocent suffering is not referred to here) except that he does not love himself in the right way? When a man in self torment thinks to do God a service by martyring himself, what is his sin except not willing to love himself in the right way? Alas, and when a man lays violent hands on himself, is not his sin just this that he does not rightly love himself in genuine understanding of how a man ought to love himself? There is a lot of talk in the world about treachery and faithlessness - and God help us, it is all too true - but still let us never because of this forget that every man has in himself the most dangerous traitor of all...But is it not therefore all the more important that the teaching of Christianity should be brought to mind again and again, the teaching that a man should love his neighbour as himself, that is, as he ought to love himself.[1]

The depth and relevance of this passage speaks for itself. Any minister or public servant who has been involved in the tragedies of human suffering should acknowledge the need for an understanding of proper self-love. Christianity, says Kierkegaard, is the antidote for the ancient deadly sin of accidie...despair.[2]

In summation, Kierkegaard's concept of self-love rests upon the "ultimate paradox" of Luke 14:26. "Whoever comes to me cannot be my disciple unless he hates his Father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and his sisters, and himself as well." Only by denying oneself and 'selfish' loves is it possible to

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1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 39
2. Normally translated, wrongly, as 'sloth', this 'sin' has received massive treatment in twentieth century ego psychology, and related theologies. In this regard, one might view Bernard Loomer, Paul Tillich, and Seward Hiltner as S.K.'s 'heirs'. The various interpretations of "self" in our century are too diverse and numerous for attention here. Nevertheless the concept of self-love is still an often refuted characteristic in many modern theologies. For one treatment of accidie cf. Seward Hiltner, Theological Dynamics, Abingdon, Nashville, 1972, p. 96 ff.

overcome the despair of self-seeking self-love, in learning to live dependently upon God in whom the 'true' self is constituted. Self-love in its proper or true relationship to itself is discovered by obeying the command to love the neighbour as oneself. By denying oneself in deference to the neighbour one finds the self again. The neighbour is therefore the 'other' in an epistemological sense, in and through whom the true self is identified. Finally, precisely because self-love is equivalent with love for the neighbour, the movement from inadequate self-love to proper self-love is a "paradox", a "passion" in the same sense that faith and love are passions. Thus the capacity "to love oneself in the right way" is not a characteristic which is subject to rational explanation, but it nevertheless requires the will to believe that despair may be overcome. For his assertion that self-love is part of the credible agenda of theology, Kierkegaard deserves much credit.[1]

2. Romantic Love and Friendship

Kierkegaard's concept of self-love is applicable to his whole critique of "Christendom" and not merely to his attempt to discover a faithful concept of self. For him, most of what has gone by the name of love has been various forms of self-love disguised in the "poetry" of culture. What Kierkegaard means in his frequent references to "the poet" is too complex to detain us here; generally he is referring to the attempts of historians, philosophers, theologians, and indeed "poets" (such as Shakespeare) to clothe self-seeking ideologies in the garb of morality and Christian virtue. As he tells us, "the virtues of paganism are glittering vices".[2] Romantic

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1. For the difference between Kierkegaard's concept of self-love, and certain views of St. Augustine, upon which it is dependent, c.f. Oliver O'Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1980.
2. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 251 (Plato is a constant reference for S.K.) Kierkegaard also refers to himself, especially in his early works, as "a poet". Later he becomes an "apostle". cf. Works of Love. p. 337

love and friendship have been so praised by "the poet" that they appear to pass for the love of Christianity. But these ideals, "beautiful" though they may be, are infected with possessiveness, jealousy, egocentrism, and exclusiveness. As such, even in their 'passionate' forms, they constitute forms of despairing self-love.

In the passionate love of a romantic couple, the third member is excluded. Not only does their love become the heightened unity of their individual self-loves, but God is also excluded in the completion of their mutual bonding. Kierkegaard expressly criticizes cultural marriage ceremonies in which the priest assumes the tacit role of "the poet". He becomes a conspirator in praising a counterfeit and temporal mutual self-love, far removed from the love of the eternal.[1] Such marriages, in the beginning at least, are grounded upon a coincidence of good fortune, a love which "happens to" the persons involved. Only time (and their faith) will tell whether their love can grow into an eternal relationship. If it is to do so, it must become grounded upon the strenuous "thou shalt" of the commandment to love God, and the neighbour as oneself. But the intensity of the passion which stimulates romance in the beginning can be a boon as well as a bane. The passion can grow to correspond with the passion of faith; or it can deteriorate into the worst expressions of vanity and selfishness.

Only when self-love, informed by faith, is able "to will its own downfall" is it transformed into the proper love of self which acknowledges both God and the neighbour in an inclusive orientation toward others. In this transformation, self-love is "taken captive" and recognizes its "duty" incorporated in the commandment to love the neighbour as the self. The "thou shalt" of the commandment entails the virtual abolition of previous exclusive loves.[2] Under

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1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, pp. 45-46 (Compare Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity", trans. Knox, op. cit. pp. 250-251.
2. Not totally abolished, however; self-love constantly remains as a "temptation". cf. Philosophical Fragments, p. 59

the new priority of relationship to God, a lover must be willing to sacrifice his own love for the beloved if the love is threatening to his own God-relationship. The God-relationship is threatened if the beloved is placed 'above' the neighbour. Such a threat, no doubt, had something to do with Kierkegaard's sacrifice of Regine. Kierkegaard is assertive in stressing that one must not allow oneself to love another person more than God; nor must one allow oneself to be loved by another person more than the other person loves God; nor must one allow oneself to elevate one's beloved above the inclusive love which is commanded: to love the neighbour as oneself.[1]

In his later works more consistently 'love for God', the passion of faith, was construed for Kierkegaard as the capacity to love one's neighbour as oneself. If particular love's passion is placed in such a relationship to a person, then the passion of faith is in jeopardy. In other words, love for God cannot be sustained unless one is able to love the neighbour. The neighbour cannot be loved consistently if a "passionate preference" raises a special beloved to a love which is no different from "the other I", the other "myself". By implication, romantic love cuts out the neighbour just as it cuts out God. It is a love in which "two I's come together to form one I". And the more united the two become, the more they constitute a united self which cuts itself off from all others.[2] So strenuous is "the royal law" that even love for enemies is required. Kierkegaard asserts that a person must be able to love the neighbour who is near by, as well as the neighbour who may not be seen. But "in love and friendship one's neighbour is not loved, but one's other self; the first I once again, but more intensely."[3]

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1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 113. Kierkegaard's emphasis upon love of neighbour in Works of Love is difficult to reconcile completely with his emphasis upon love for God in earlier works. The latter writings may constitute a more mature interpretation of the Paradox.
2. ibid. p. 68
3. ibid. p. 69

As Kierkegaard stressed that there is an absolute, supra-ethical duty to God, possibly entailing behavious which could not be deemed rationally ethical, there is also an absolute duty to the neighbour. The duty to the neighbour derives from the duty to God. Thus the ethical priority of faith is the love of neighbour. Kierkegaard's radical interpretation of this idea indicates that neither family nor friends nor a romantic lover should be allowed to come between the duty to the neighbour. Who is my neighbour? He is the person toward whom I have duty, as commanded in the royal law. "By recognizing your duty, you easily discover who is your neighbour...He toward whom I have a duty is my neighbour and when I fulfil my duty I prove that I am a neighbour."[1] If romantic love and friendship sustain priority over the duty to the neighbour, implied in faith's command, then, for Kierkegaard, it is not love which is concerned at all, but rather a projected egocentric love of self.[2] If, on the other hand, a person who, having been given the condition for faith, wills in obedience to love his neighbour to the exclusion of egocentric loves, that person, paradoxically, loves himself rightly.[3]

Despite Kierkegaard's strenuous language about Christian love, contrasting with the "passion of preference" characteristic of romantic love and friendship, he retains an appreciation for the "aesthetic" quality of temporal affections. As self-love involves itself with another, even if it is an extension of the self, there may be the kernel of an eventual maturity in love. Childish loves may be transformed through a developing faith into loves which are eternal, by being related to God, and by acknowledgement of the duty to love the neighbour.

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1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. pp. 37-38
2. ibid. p. 113
3. Faith is not a matter of will; but love of neighbour is, at least initially, a matter of "obedience". Works of Love, p. 36

> The Christian may well marry, may well love his wife, especially in the way he ought to love her, may well have a friend and love his native land; but in all this there ought to be a fundamental understanding between him and God in the Christian sense - this is Christianity.[1]

"Christianity," says Kierkegaard, "is that which will thus make everything new, while nevertheless everything is old."[2] Only when both parties in a relationship (e.g. a marriage) acknowledge their dependence upon God, does human love become "like sterling silver", not subject to change, dependably lasting. Such a mature relationship is open to persons outside the marriage; but if it becomes again possessive, it suffers from "an illusion of love". To be sure, says Kierkegaard, a man does not love his wife or his friend in exactly the same way as he loves his neighbour, but this is not an <u>essential</u> difference.

> The person who does not pay attention to the fact that his wife is for him the neighbour and only then his wife never comes to love his neighbour, no matter how many people he loves, for he has made exception of his wife. This exception he will love all too intensely throughout his whole life or all too passionately, and then all too coolly.[3]

We notice here a profound sense of justice acknowledged by Kierkegaard in every human relationship. Only as the neighbour is loved, <u>as</u> the self, is the context of justice possible in which love may grow and last. The erotic, or the familiar, cannot replace the requirement for equality, the sense of justice, that makes love possible. Passionate preference is no substitute for treating even the most familiar person with the same sense of respect which one ought to have for oneself. But at the same time, says Kierkegaard, "to love without passion is an impossibility". The passion of

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1. ibid. p. 145 For Kierkegaard, romantic love and friendship are spontaneous, changeable, temporal passions of preference, unless viewed through faith. Thus they are <u>ordinarily</u> forms of disguised egocentrism.
2. ibid.
3. Kierkegaard, <u>Works of Love</u>, op. cit. p. 145.

preference may stimulate romantic love and friendship, but it cannot sustain them.[1] A greater passion is required, the "highest passion", by which one is capable of loving the neighbour as oneself. The love of neighbour is a governing ethic which is influenced by the passion of faith, but becomes, in virtue of it, the mature passion of love. First it is commanded and obeyed; later it may become "spontaneous".

To summarize these brief remarks on Kierkegaard's transformation of romantic love and friendship, we note that preferential passion is self-love in disguise; but like egocentric self-love it may grow to an eternal and transformed passion, which relates the self to itself in the context of divine love. Love, like faith, is indeed a passion. All passion is essentially divine, the unifying common experience of humanity. But there are authentic passions and passions which time discloses as temporal illusions. Each must be transformed in the light of the eternal. Love has both an aesthetic quality and an eternal quality, and there may be a connection between the two; the aesthetic may even prepare the way for the eternal. "No one has escaped from love or ever will so long as there be beauty and eyes to see with."[2]

Certainly love cannot be reduced by the criteria of reason. The passion of love must be preserved, even as it becomes the mature, just, equitable love of neighbour, even as it is realized through the perceptions of duty and obedience. Christianity, says Kierkegaard, has abolished all the distinctions between the many different kinds of love, and indeed knows only one kind. Christian love is the essential love, indeed, "love is God". As such it lies at the root of every love. Faith is the highest passion; but in another sense

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1. For S.K. there is little substantial difference between romantic love and friendship. Both are passionate preferences which tend to militate against proper love for God and the neighbour unless they are changed into the love of the Eternal, as God becomes the third member of the relationship. If they are not so changed, then both are merely egocentric self-love in disguise.
2. Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, p. 112

faith is the return of the lover's love to the lover, yet made visible again in love for the neighbour.

In the stress upon love for the neighbour, Kierkegaard preserves the idea of justice which is originally disclosed in the Incarnation. "Love does not alter the beloved, it alters itself". Christian love is not conditional, not dependent upon the virtue present or not present in the beloved. It is love which is not manipulative, making no 'demands'.[1] If love becomes dependent upon virtue in the beloved, it ceases to be love, and becomes self-projection. Kierkegaard believes that any preference in loving leads to injustice; the wife, the family, or the comrade is elevated under preferential passion to an exclusive status which shuts out the neighbour. If the wife, the family, or the comrade is to be loved in the Christian sense, it must be with a love that acknowledges a triangular relationship between the two persons and God. God is the third party, the invisible bond, indeed, the very bonding love which combines loves, properly conceived, into a tri-unity superseding mutuality. God's love then stipulates that there must be no exclusiveness in the relationship. Love for God <u>is</u> expressed and made visible as love for the neighbour, in equality with oneself.[2]

3. Summary: True and False Self-Love

From the above references to Kierkegaard's remarks about romantic love and friendship, we may now note several points in relation to self-love.

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1. cf. Kierkegaard, <u>Works of Love</u>, op. cit. p. 38. God loves, apparently, without <u>demanding</u> that his love be returned. He does, however, <u>command</u> that one's neighbour shall be loved. In <u>Works of Love</u> Kierkegaard seems to ignore the command to love God in any other sense than by loving one's neighbour, a possible departure from earlier views:"Truly a profession of faith is not enough." (p. 344)
2. Kierkegaard rarely mentions the inherent justice which is entailed in his idea of love of neighbour. His criteria of equality, lack of possessiveness, refusal to manipulate, and inclusiveness are all implicit principles of justice which lend credibility to his idea of love's 'works'.

(1) Kierkegaard recognizes and to some extent develops the need for a proper self-love in Christian theology. Although he does distinguish between the inadequate self-love that leads to despair and the mature self-love which arises through faith, he detects the possibility that the 'positive' type of self-love may develop from the 'negative' type.

(2) His idea of a proper love of self in relation to God and the neighbour entails the "paradox" of self-renunciation and devotion to the neighbour. The command to love the neighbour is an 'imperative' which becomes the 'indicative' of faith. Only through love of neighbour is the true self "grounded transparently in the Power which constituted it."

(3) Romantic love and friendship conceived by "the poet" are forms of inauthentic self-love. They are temporal loves, subject to change. They may be transformed into "eternal" loves through recognition of the duty to love the neighbour which overcomes "the passion of preference". Faith is a greater "passion" which does not allow the elevation of self and selfish loves above the love due to the neighbour.

(4) Proper love for spouse, friends, comrades, etc., is the recognition that they are first of all "the neighbour", to be loved <u>as</u> oneself, and not to the exclusion of others. The concept of "neighbour" implies a context of justice for every love. All jealousy, possessiveness, coercion, and inequality of preference and treatment are excluded.

(5) Even though the commandment to love the neighbour must be obeyed, love without passion is not love. Through faith there may be a conversion of duty into spontaneous love, by which, love for the neighbour becomes more than dry obedience. The preferential passions of romantic love and friendship must be transformed into passions which are correlative with the love of God, disclosed in the Incarnation. But passion itself must be preserved, for the human's love

for God, faith, is the greatest passion of all. We turn now to look at Kierkegaard's attempt to show how obedience may be changed into spontaneous, passionate love for the neighbour.

III. The Duty of Love

1. Love and Will

In distinction from the spontaneous, romantic, aesthetic conception of love described in poetry and song, Kierkegaard stresses the notion of a love which is different because it is intimately related to faith. "Although a man cannot give himself the condition for faith, he must will to love."[1] The idea of a love which can be willed, says Kierkegaard, is essentially different from the happy fortune of romance. In prescribing the "royal law" that the neighbour shall be loved, Jesus does not even ask the question whether love can be willed. Set in the form of a command, there is no doubt for Kierkegaard that the love of the New Testament is initially an imperative which demands unquestioning obedience. But the imperative is also a paradox which discloses the indicative of a person's love for God. The subtle movement from duty to spontaneity is characteristic of Kierkegaard's concept of the Christian ethic, superseding duty conceived rationally. This movement is a general theme in Works of Love. How Kierkegaard attempts to unite duty and love in the context of faith may be seen in his interpretation of I John 5:3, "to love God is to keep his commands."

> It is as if the apostle said, "Dear me, what is all this which would hinder you from loving; what is all this which you can win by self-love; the commandment is that you shall love, but when you understand life and yourself, then it is as if you should not need to be commanded, because to love human beings is still the only thing worth living for; without this love you really do not live; to love human beings is also the only salutary consolation for both time and eternity, and to love human beings is the only true sign that you are a Christian.[2]

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1. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 134
2. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p.344

In other words, Kierkegaard states explicitly, "a profession of faith is not enough."[1] Faith that is grounded upon an impression of "the omnipotent wonder worker" and not the God who became a servant is not really faith. If faith is to be preserved in action it is made functional through the strenuous commandment to love the neighbour as the self. God himself provides the conditions for obedience to the divine command, by becoming human and in his humanity removing the offence, the alienating factor in human inequality with God.

Because the commandment to love is so antithetical to love conceived as spontaneous inclination by "the poet", and thereby capricious, Kierkegaard claims that such a command "cannot have been conceived in any human heart". Yet, there is a sense in which love must become once more spontaneous precisely through its character of duty. (Kierkegaard's dialectic is at work again.) Love must be able to retain "its ardor, its joy, its desire, its originative power, its living freshness".[2] True spontaneity in loving occurs in virtue of love's capacity to be willed. Only conceived, and obeyed, as primary duty motivated by absolute duty to God (and so to the neighbour) can love make the leap from the realm of the temporal, changeable, and capricious to the realm of the eternal. But implicit within the obedience to the divine command is an assumption that such obedience attains, through practice and devotion, the character of <u>developing</u> spontaneity. "Only when it is a duty to love, only then is love eternally secured against every change, eternally made free in blessed independence eternally and happily secured against despair."[3]

But because egocentric self-love is never entirely annihilated, love can never be <u>assumed</u> to be spontaneous in the ordinary sense.

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1. ibid.
2. ibid. p. 50
3. ibid. p. 44

Spontaneity in loving is only something which develops as a person, in faith, learns more and more what love is like, and then "should not need to be commanded". Kierkegaard implies that "a knight of faith" might be able to love, as he ought to love, spontaneously. But human sin is so persistent that virtue in the Christian sense must be determined by the command to love the neighbour as oneself; it can never be taken for granted. Love must be believed and it must be willed. "The 'how' of (human) love is not the 'how' of faith."[1] But faith, one's love for God, informs one's love for human beings, making the will to love the neighbour possible, in the context of obedience to the "royal law".

2. Justice Inherent in the Royal Law

Kierkegaard's individualism has often made him appear to be a kind of 'Christian' Max Stirner. An "absolute relation of the individual to the Absolute" does indeed highlight an emphasis upon the individual which might undermine social responsibility. However, it is apparent from Kierkegaard's attempt to set the faithful individual in a context of God's own transformation of equality and justice, viewed in the light of the paradox of the Incarnation, that his idea of ethics, of a wider justice applicable to all human relations, is intimately related to his idea of love.

The commandment to love is applicable both to neighbours "seen" and "unseen". He criticizes equally those who declare that love is possible only for those whom their lives touch, and those who reserve their love for folk far away. Love for those whom we see is a demanding task, which demands "the closed eye" of gentleness and forbearance, which does not see defects and imperfections.[2]

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1. Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript (trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie), Princeton University Press, 1941 p. 30
2. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 159

Love loves without altering the beloved, continues to love if the beloved is changed for the worse, even if the beloved comes to hate the lover. Love is ready with forgiveness before the beloved is ready to ask it, consummates a 'spiritual' reconciliation even though the beloved may continue to be estranged. Kierkegaard holds Christ's love for Peter, the disciple who denied him, as the paradigm for love between friends. In proper relation to God, love "covers a multitude of sins".[1] Love is called "the duty to be in debt to the neighbour". The debt is one of action, or response to the neighbour's need, wherever or whomever he may be.

Kierkegaard notes especially the Christian's responsibility to and for the poor. Material charity is only a small part of what is required in "works" of humility, equality, and shared suffering. The precept is Christ's ministry among the poor:

> If one did not have money, but understood how to speak of mercifulness in a way encouraging and inspiring to the poor, the wretched, I wonder if he would not have done just as much as he who tossed the poor some money or preached benevolence out of the pockets of the rich![2]

Mercy, says Kierkegaard, is prior to benevolence. "Have mercy, and then giving money takes care of itself."[3] He also distinguishes an inherent sense of justice in the neighbour's sense of self, in light of one's own proper selfhood appreciated in dependence upon God.

> To have individuality is to believe in the individuality of every other person; for individuality is not mine, but God's gift by which he gives me being and gives being to all.[4]

In light of Christ's love, transforming self-love into love of neighbour, Kierkegaard says that the concept of possession is radically altered in definition.

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1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. pp. 165 ff.
2. ibid. p. 293
3. ibid. p. 297 Compare Feuerbach: "Mercy is the justice of sensuous life." (Das Rechtsgefuhl der Sinnlichkeit,)
4. ibid. p. 253 Compare Feuerbach: "Love is...to recognize the just self-love of another." The Diary, Werke, Band 2, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p.49

> The category mine disappears completely only for self-renouncing love, and the distinction mine and yours ceases entirely...Only spiritual love has the courage to will to have no mine at all, the courage to abolish completely the distinction between mine and yours, and therefore it wins God...The true lover seeks not his own.[1]

In the duty to love the neighbour, it is the Christian's duty to inspire love, in the proper relation to God, but without coercion. Love, says Kierkegaard, can only be "loved forth".[2] The duty the Christian owes to God is owed simultaneously to the neighbour, in light of the strenuous commandment to love. Implicit in the commandment is that authentic love, like that shown in the Incarnation, cannot be achieved 'from above'. The Christian must be willing to make himself equal with the neighbour. "Love is exultant when it unites equals, but it is triumphant when it makes that which was unequal equal in love."

What is possible for God because of the "omnipotence of love" is not so easy for human beings. Our love in light of God's demonstrated love must be a constant effort of will; the duty of the royal law is, or should be, "a slave who reminds you daily" that Christian love is a difficult task. The "you shall" of the commandment preserves and protects the passion of love so that habit cannot be substituted for it.[3] The "you shall" is the element which denies jealousy, possessiveness, egotism, and a kind of piety which becomes divorced from love's task and demand in this world. Only with the retention of the duty can love be maintained in accord with the ideal of equality, in renunciation of egocentrism, against the constant threat of inauthentic self-love in various forms, and in fulfilment of selfhood.[4]

Kierkegaard's closing statement in Works of Love demonstrates

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1. ibid. pp. 250-251
2. This appears to be an Augustinian reference to the way in which God inspires human amor Dei. Kierkegaard applies it also to human love for other humans. cf. Works of Love, op. cit. p. 206
3. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 51
4. The strict equality of self and neighbour before God is derived directly from Augustine. cf. Oliver O'Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, op. cit. Chapter 5, pp. 113 ff. The 'as yourself' is regula amoris, 'the measure of love' for Augustine.

the constant challenge presented in the commandment to love the neighbour as the self, the inherent justice in that "law", and the hope of a grace which will compensate for human inadequacy in measuring up to the precept of Christ.

> Just as the well-brought-up child has an unforgettable conception of rigour, so also must the human being who relates himself to God's love, if he is not "foolishly" (I Tim. 4:7) or light-mindedly to take it in vain, have an unforgettable fear and trembling, even though he rests in God's love. Such a person will certainly avoid speaking to God about the wrongs of others toward him, about the speck in his brother's eye, for such a person will rather speak to God only about grace, lest this fateful word justice lose everything for him through what he himself has called forth, the rigorous like-for-like.[1]

"The rigorous like-for-like", it may be remembered, is the point of departure in Kierkegaard's analogy of the king who loved a humble maiden. The commandment to love, obeyed in faith until the love shown by faith becomes in part "spontaneous", is Kierkegaard's attempt at a correction of Christian ethics. The love of humans for God, the passion of faith, brings upon the head of the believer the task and demand of love in a rigorous Christian sense; we must love because God first loved us; and we are called to love <u>as</u> God loved us. The onus of the Incarnation is brought to bear upon the loves of humanity; love does not alter the beloved, it alters itself. Love wills to break the barriers that alienate authentic relationships between human beings - specifically egotism and the "preferential passions" which characterize romantic love and friendship in the terms of "the poet". <u>Just</u> love is love of neighbour, in which the self is identified as the neighbour, and God is identified in, and <u>as</u> authentic love for the neighbour.[2] Kierkegaard has attempted to preserve the inherent passion and justice of the Moment of the Incarnation, visible only to "the eyes of faith".

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1. Kierkegaard, <u>Works of Love</u>, op. cit. p. 353
2. ibid. p. 247 "...the only true object of a human being's love is love which is God, who thereby in a deeper sense is not an object at all, since he is himself love." i.e. in loving the love in just love for one's neighbour, by loving the neighbour as oneself and in equality with him, one loves God.

IV. Short Assessment and Critique

Without doubt Kierkegaard has offered modern theology a unique and far-reaching approach to the retention of the idea of love in an intimate connection with faith. The numerous interpretations of Kierkegaard are witnesses to his effectiveness at stimulating reflection upon faith and love together, as well as many other concerns. The idea of the self, the uniqueness of the individual, the supra-ethical character of Christianity, and the inadequacy of rational theology are allied issues upon which no definitive statement has yet been produced. Particularly, he has asserted, as perhaps no other theologian has been able, that Christianity requires a different context of thought relative to the totally unique foundations of faith: "Faith begins precisely where thinking leaves off." In addition, a thorough reading of Kierkegaard shows how "unthinkable" is the love of God, how demanding is the "rigorous" work in loving one's neighbour, and how conditional and inadequate are our ordinary human passions.

Although Kierkegaard rarely uses the term 'justice', it is in the background of his strenuous characterization of Christian works of love, opposed to and overcoming the injustices of Christendom. His criteria for authentic expressions of love are, in fact, principles of justice. Love is not manipulative; it causes people to alter themselves instead of making demands on the beloved. Love is not possessive or jealous; it loves even when it is not reciprocated. Love, as forgiveness, covers a multitude of wrongs. Love assumes the equality of all persons; genuine love for oneself is realized only as the self is recognized in one's neighbour, in respect of the neighbour's God-given selfhood. Passionate preference, for friends, family, and country, leads to inequality between human beings; therefore love requires inclusiveness. On this last point, however, Kierkegaard may have overstated his case. Balanced and appropriate loyalties for certain 'friends', passionate and joyful

preferences for some humans over others, may not necessarily lead to injustice. Jesus, we remember, had at least twelve special friends, and "he loved them to the end". "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Although Kierkegaard undoubtedly has some understanding of God's grace, I wonder whether it is adequate. For him, at least prior to his Easter experience of 1848, grace is incapable of finally cutting through the alienation between the divine and the human. The "offence" always remains as the stumbling-block which prevents the conscious appropriation of God's saving love. The individual, at some point, is always 'thrown back upon himself' and must make his own "leap of faith". Personally, I find it difficult to believe that faith can ultimately actuate God's saving love, although I think Kierkegaard is right in his assessment of faith's work in identifying the supra-rational ethic of love of neighbour as oneself in identification and equality with one's fellow human being. One might wish for more emphasis upon God's enabling grace in the transition of the individual from the love of the temporal to the love of the eternal. Removal of the "offence" may not be enough.[1]

The Christian might recall that Paul was able to speak of God's kingdom being born willy-nilly in our midst, in the process of which, somehow, "all things work together" (Romans 8:28 ff). Paul's allusions to God's supportive, creative, enabling love must be set alongside his "strenuous" emphasis upon faith. Perhaps Kierkegaard, in his zeal to set love in the context of faith, has forgotten to allow God a continuous, effective role in history, in the innumerable 'descrete leaps of decision' which succeed each other in producing a climate for greater love, greater justice, and even greater faith.

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1. cf. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV/2, E.T. G.W. Bromiley, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1958. p. 747: "If only the final impression left by this book were not that of the detective skill with which non-Christian love is tracked down to its last hiding place, examined, shown to be worthless, and haled before the judge!" Barth sees little grace in Works of Love, although Kierkegaard profoundly influenced Barth (particularly in his early theology).

Kierkegaard may be right to assert that "no generation has yet learned to love from another" just as faith cannot be taught. But he has nevertheless identified a primal generative possibility in all human passion, which may become "the highest passion". Passion, he says, is "man's perdition as well as his exaltation". "He who is lost through passion has not lost so much as he who has lost passion, for the former had the possibility."[1] Despite Kierkegaard's radical separation between inauthentic passions and the passion of faith, one may detect in the movement between them a subtle providence, the evidence of God's love which supports and sustains human beings even in despair. God's creativity, based upon the "possibility" inherent in passions, seems to be already at work even before it becomes conscious for the individual. But this Kierkegaard, who really does detect a providential movement between religiosity 'A' and religiosity 'B', is too often eclipsed by his insistent dualism between them. Of course Kierkegaard might answer that we have here a paradox; God's grace is undoubtedly active all along, but it only becomes active for the individual in the Moment.

Nevertheless, the paradox has often been misinterpreted by persons less able than himself to "understand" it. For example, our century has witnessed an extensive discussion of one of Kierkegaard's dualistic characterizations of the idea of love:

> "In the whole of the New Testament there is not found a word about love in the sense in which the poet sings of it and paganism defined it.[2]

As Iring Fetscher criticized Karl Marx's Theses on Feuerbach, the words may apply to Kierkegaard: "Das ist sicher alles ganz richtig, aber doch nicht die ganze Wahrheit."[3] We must examine further the alleged dualism between the love of the New Testament, and love in culture's understanding.

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1. Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, op. cit. p. 29 Kierkegaard's emphasis on passion in faith recalls the 'divine madness' of Plato. cf. The Phaedrus, 244 ff.
2. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 59
3. Iring Fetscher, "Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx", Hegelstudien, Bonn, 1963 p. 376. ("That is certainly all quite correct, but it is still not the whole truth.")

APPENDIX TO PART ONE

Feuerbach and Kierkegaard

It would be unfair to either Feuerbach or Kierkegaard to overstress their similarity. It is for some very good reasons that Feuerbach is today remembered for his atheism, while Kierkegaard gets credit for asserting an idea of God completely unaccountable to human ideology. Yet, Feuerbach's answer of "anthropology" and Kierkegaard's answer of "paradox" are replies to a similar question posed in different ways and by different authors throughout the Enlightenment: "What is religion, specifically the Christian religion?" Entailed in the analysis that led to the question were so many contradictions of human experience and human reason that one might no longer assume a simple, intrinsic correlation between faith and reason. The creeds of the Church presented an anomaly to people who were beginning to attain a scientific outlook. The relationship of matter to thought, of scientific and empirical data to rational analysis began to be examined; the affirmations of faith were tried and found wanting. Not only did the medieval doctrines of God begin to be questioned, but the correspondence of belief to action also came under examination. How was it that Christianity had become so much an accepted and established religion that it could hardly be distinguished from the idea of the state? How could the ethical ideals of the New Testament be reconciled with either the wars and pettiness of temporal Christendom, or the pompous pretence of ecclesiastical spokesmen? How could the ideal of equality and justice for all persons under God be reconciled with the tacit support and approval of church and state for feudal class hierarchies?

The short answer of both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard was, "It couldn't." For both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard, the 'truth' of Christianity lay elsewhere than in the cultural assumptions which bound church and state together, bound faith to credal formulae,

bound Christian ethics to the law of the land, bound human love to national identity. In a very real sense, the most deliberate, underlying concern, shared and cherished by both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard, was concern for human justice and human liberation. Of course, how such a community of liberation was to arise practically was a question to be left to others. Their contribution was to the principles by which "Christianity" might be liberated from "Christendom". Only a crude analysis of each thinker could attribute to Feuerbach and Kierkegaard a self-seeking individualism, unconcerned for social justice. In their very different ways, each identified the enslaving bonds of Christendom as the inhibition of "divine" love, expressed potentially in the "essence" of Christianity.

Of course, "divine love" and Christianity's "essence" meant radically different things to Feuerbach and Kierkegaard. If their common assertion was that love is held in bondage to Christendom, their most pronounced difference is the interpretation of this love. Whereas Feuerbach could use the term "divine" with abandon, implying usually the transcendent characteristics of the human's love for his species, the word for Kierkegaard could hardly be deemed adequate to express the absolute, radically other, "omnipotence of love" as the very quality of God himself.[1]

In light of the intrinsic similarities, as well as the ultimate opposition between Feuerbach and Kierkegaard, there is a sense in which Kierkegaard may be seen as a dialectical 'student' of Feuerbach.[2] During his visits to Berlin, Kierkegaard was immersed in the debates of left, right, and center Hegelianism. We know, for example, that he attended the inaugural lecture of Schelling on "The Philosophy

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1. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 40: "This is the God as he stands upon the earth, like unto the humblest by the power of his omnipotent love." "Omnipotent love" is constituent to the "paradox."
2. Similarly, S.K. is a "dialectical student" of Kant, Hegel, and Socrates!

of Revelation" in November, 1841, in the company of Bakunin and Engels.[1] It is not known whether Feuerbach's influence was felt directly by Kierkegaard at this time. However, Feuerbach's book, The Essence of Christianity was published in 1841, and Engels wrote later that its influence was pervasive. "Enthusiasm was general," he wrote, "we all became at once Feuerbachians." Berlin was the centre of the Young Hegelian group, and Schelling's lectures were a part of the general expectation and ferment affecting the academic community in the early days of the growing fervour which culminated in the revolution of 1848. If Engel's statement is true, that "enthusiasm was general", Feuerbach could hardly have escaped Kierkegaard's notice.

Kierkegaard's book Fear and Trembling, published in 1843, appears to be an 'answer' to the left-Hegelian critique of religion, notably apparent in the works of D.F. Strauss, as well as in Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and other radical interpreters of Hegel.[2] It may be no more than coincidence, but Feuerbach himself noted the depth of feeling contained in the story of Abraham and Isaac, which is Kierkegaard's point of departure in Fear and Trembling. Feuerbach noted that Gregory of Nyssa "could never look at an image which represented the sacrifice of Isaac without being moved to tears..."[3] And whether it is intentional or not, Kierkegaard's "paradox", developed throughout his early writings, seems to be a restatement and correction of Feuerbach's climactic chapter in The Essence of Christianity, entitled "The Contradiction of Faith and Love".[4]

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1. cf. David McLellan, The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, op. cit. p. 27. McLellan doesn't give his source, but S.K.'s Journal tells us he was in Berlin at the time.
2. McLellan notes that Strauss merely accentuated a critique which was already present among certain of Hegel's students. Strauss himself observed the "left, right, and centre" distinctions among Hegelians.
3. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 76
4. ibid. Chapter XXVI, and Appendix, Section 20.

Kierkegaard's book Philosophical Fragments or A Fragment of Philosophy is a deliberate attempt at a refutation of left-Hegelianism, pietism, and rationalism. It is clear that Kierkegaard attempts in this book to refute Feuerbach, yet taking seriously Feuerbach's critique of religion, rational theology, and doctrinal belief.[1] Kierkegaard's Journal notes that he purchased The Essence of Christianity in the second edition, and studied it while writing Philosophical Fragments during 1844.[2] An internal comparison of the two books reveals that many of Feuerbach's themes are adapted and reinterpreted by Kierkegaard. In one significant instance, what Feuerbach uses as an illustration is transformed by Kierkegaard into a central "analogy". This is Feuerbach:

> A king who has not the welfare of his subjects at heart, who, while seated on his throne, does not mentally live with them in their dwellings, who, in feeling, is not, as the people say, "a common man", such a king will not descend bodily from his throne to make his people happy by his personal appearance. Thus, has not the subject risen to be a king before the king descends to be a subject? And if the subject feels himself honoured and made happy by the personal presence of his king, does this feeling refer merely to the bodily presence, and not rather to the manifestation of the disposition, of the philanthropic nature which is the cause of the appearance? But that which in the truth of religion is the cause, takes in the consciousness of religion the form of a consequence; and so here the raising of man to God is made a consequence of the humiliation or descent of God to man. God, says religion, made himself human that he might make man divine.[3]

Feuerbach's illustration of king and subject is part of his interpretation of the "secret" (Geheimnis) of the Incarnation. It is just such a secret which concerns Kierkegaard as he develops his analogy of "the king who loved a humble maiden".

> Suppose then a king who loved a humble maiden. The heart of the king was not polluted by the wisdom that is loudly enough proclaimed; he knew nothing of the difficulties that the understanding discovers in order to ensnare the heart, which keeps the poets so busy, and make their magic formulas necessary...[4]

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1. In addition to Feuerbach, S.K. juxtaposes themes and arguments from various writers, including Strauss, Martinsen, Hegel, and Plato.
2. S.K. bought Feuerbach's book on March 20, 1844. Papirer, V.A. 14; cf. Thulstrup's commentary in Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 204
3. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p. 50
4. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. pp. 32-34

Kierkegaard's reference to the poets' "magic formulas" may well be a satirical critique of Feuerbach's interpretation of the Incarnation. In the same context Kierkegaard seems to note Feuerbach's emphasis upon matter and nutrition: "Would it not be desirable if I could confine the terms of my argument to meat and drink and did not need to bring in kings...?"[1] For Kierkegaard, the king-subject analogy must begin with a real love of the king for the subject, and not merely a condescending urge to be among "the people". The "subject" becomes a "maiden" with whom the king is in love. The king cannot merely "elevate" the maiden because of the resentment, the "offence", which would be incurred. Kierkegaard restates Feuerbach's illustration of the Incarnation, but adds the ingredients of a kingly love, and a "kingly grief", that he might cause offence by his condescension. An "appearance" of likeness is not enough; the king must actually become like the maiden.

Kierkegaard's version of the king-subject analogy/illustration recognizes a God, who, because of the depth of his love, cannot permit himself to "make himself human" simply in order to make humanity "happy". Condescension alone would be resented. An "appearance" of God as man could not break down the alienation by which God and humanity are separated. Therefore, God did not "make himself human that he might make man divine", as Feuerbach interprets the Incarnation. Rather, for Kierkegaard, the Incarnation is purely a function of God's "unfathomable", "omnipotent" love, motivated by his "kingly grief" that the union of love might be only partial.

Kierkegaard's analogy of "the king who loved a humble maiden" might be called a characterization of an 'existential' problem of the divine. For Feuerbach, "the divine" has existence only in terms of the human. For Kierkegaard, the divine is "eternal" but has an overwhelming need to become an existent within time, within

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1. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 32

'the finite'. Thus we may see one way in which Kierkegaard takes a Feuerbachian idea, and transforms it dialectically to serve his purpose. It is a subtle method, illustrating the effect of dialectic upon dialectic. (As we may remember, Feuerbach himself had used the same method in his critique of Hegel.) Although the dynamics between Kierkegaard and Feuerbach are far too complex to describe fully, I will try to list the main comparisons.

(1) For Feuerbach faith and love are contradictions. Kierkegaard attempts to overcome the contradiction but without recourse to the doctrinal rationalism of Christendom, which had forced Feuerbach into the necessity of denying the conjunction of love of neighbour with credal faith. Kierkegaard develops the idea of "paradox" to avoid Feuerbach's criticism that reason cannot be applied to belief, which is not rational.

(2) Feeling, Sinnlichkeit, is Feuerbach's principle of unity for human existence and human species-consciousness. Kierkegaard develops the idea of feeling into the notion of "passion". "That in which all human life is unified is passion and faith is a passion." Indeed, "the highest passion is faith." For Feuerbach, feeling at its highest point is species-love. Kierkegaard's dialectical transformation of feeling/love is passion/love for God (i.e. faith). But both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard come together again in stressing practical ethics as love of neighbour.

(3) Feuerbach, following Hegel, attempts to "posit the infinite in the finite" through the "image" of the Incarnation. For Kierkegaard the Incarnation is a "paradox", not merely an image, and still not subject to rational criticism nor to historical documentation. It is the "Moment" in which "the eternal" enters time, both as an event, and as an event particularly appropriate for the finite individual. The idea of "the infinite in the finite" (Feuerbach) is dialectically related to "the eternal in time" (Kierkegaard).

(4) Feuerbach elevates the human to the divine in the Incarnation; Kierkegaard lowers the divine to the human in a movement which is the revelation of "the omnipotence of love", Feuerbach's interpretation presupposes a latend "divinity" in human love; Kierkegaard presupposes an infinite "difference in quality" between human love and divine love. For Kierkegaard, the human is not "elavated" at all; God becomes like the human; the human is loved by God, but is never like God.

(5) Both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard say that "love is God", but they mean different things. Feuerbach means that love, qua human species-love, is the most divine attribute of the human, and thus transcends the individual in a creative movement toward species and community. For Kierkegaard, love is only truly love if it is revealed through "the eyes of faith". God is love, and love is God; but human love outside of faith is tantamount to egotism, even if it presumes to be selfless in motive. Faith, for Kierkegaard, is the only authentication of love as God, as according to the divine command, the neighbour is loved as the self.

(6) Both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard insist that one must "believe in love". For Feuerbach, it is the only thing worthy to be believed in which transcends individual experience. For Kierkegaard a belief in love as "a knight of infinite resignation" preserves the "possibility" of authentic love. For "a knight of faith", a belief in love preserves the relationship with the eternal and facilitates obedience to the divine command that the neighbour shall be loved.

(7) For both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard, love is a principle of self-identification. For Feuerbach human love enables a growing species-consciousness: "The love of others tells you who you are." For Kierkegaard, the love of neighbour informs authentic selfhood, in that only through self-renunciation is true selfhood possible: "Like is known by like."[1]

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1. Both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard may be dependent upon Hegel's notion of I-thou epistemology. In describing Jesus' encounter with the woman who touched his garment, Hegel said, "Jesus recognized in her a heart like his own, read in her faith her heart's elevation above law and fate, and declared to her the forgiveness of her sins." Hegel, The Spirit of Christianity, trans. T.M. Knox, op. cit. p. 239

The capacity for community in the encounter between I and thou is not essentially different for Feuerbach and Kierkegaard. The difference is rather in the ultimate significance of the encounter. For Feuerbach the I-thou relationship facilitates greater community between persons; for Kierkegaard it also facilitates community between God and the faithful individual.

(8) Both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard acknowledge that exclusive love is inadequate. For Feuerbach, corporate self-love is identified in nationalism. Kierkegaard agrees, but develops the idea farther. "Whoever comes to me cannot be my disciple unless he hates his father and his mother, his wife, and his children, and himself as well." This is the "ultimate paradox" which totally prohibits exclusive loves. Neighbour-love is absolutely equitable, allowing for no "passionate preference".

(9) For Feuerbach the individual is only an individual in reference to his species, and cannot be conceived outside his fellow-creatures. Kierkegaard departs from this idea radically. Faith is the paradox that the individual is a "particular that is higher than the universal". The individual has his ultimate responsibility to "the Absolute". This relation may supersede responsibility to the community.

(10) Feuerbach's idea of ethics is grounded upon love as the human's greatest, most "divine" attribute. It stems from, and further enables, the identification of the I with the thou, making possible an unalienated expression of love in a greater community, as the love becomes increasingly actualized through developing "species consciousness". Kierkegaard's view of ethics is accountable only, ultimately, to the individual's relation to the Absolute, because through faith, the individual is higher than the universal. But <u>practically</u>, Kierkegaard's idea of ethics is grounded upon the "duty" to love the neighbour as oneself, enabled through the transformation of human self-love in all its forms into a love which is not self-seeking

and is thus "eternal" as it wills to love the neighbour.

(11) Both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard demonstrate the inadequacy of conceptions of a God who is not, in some sense, relational. Both insist that God must be able to feel exactly what humans feel, suffer as humans suffer, and experience the limitations of time and space. This critique of rational and hypostatized concepts of God is perhaps their greatest commonality. But at the same time, the implications they draw from the critique is their greatest difference. For Feuerbach, the need for God to be able to identify with the human condition implies that the human himself is "divine". For Kierkegaard, it means that God has not been properly 'understood' as "omnipotent love", who is constrained to identify with the human condition, to become "absolutely relative" to the individual human being. Thus they both argue, in different ways, against a rationalized absolute deity who is impassible, or incapable of experiencing human deficiencies. In their own ways they both posit a God of love who is "absolutely relative" to the human condition. For Feuerbach it implies the divinity in the human; for Kierkegaard it implies the humanity in the divine.

Summary

Kierkegaard's point of departure in many of his works is a critique of Feuerbach's "contradiction of faith and love". This "contradiction" stems from the rationalism of the Enlightenment, reaching a climax in the writings of Immanuel Kant. Although Feuerbach brought the "contradiction" to the suface during the pre-revolutionary ferment in Germany, the contradiction is derived from Hegel. In Hegel's own attempt to resolve the contradiction he tried to hold faith, love, and reason together in a universal "system". The system lies in the immediate background of both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard, and both tried to find ways to resolve the contradiction which would

not place love in subjection to reason, as both Kant and Hegel had attempted to do. Reason was found to be inadequate for an explanation of love by both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard; for Feuerbach because it could not make sense of human feeling, and because love was found to be different, in essence, from reason; for Kierkegaard, because it could not admit the "paradox" of a relationship in which the particular individual is related absolutely to the Absolute. "The contradiction of faith and love" was a central concern of the left-Hegelian school, given form in Feuerbach's book The Essence of Christianity. But in a dialectical reinterpretation of the contradiction, Kierkegaard reinterpreted many of the Hegelian themes to attempt a 'paradoxical synthesis' (if such an idea is conceivable) between faith and love. The debates of the Hegelian schools, particularly as given form by Feuerbach, thus constitute a major catalyst in the works of Kierkegaard.[1]

In a wider sense, the connection between Feuerbach and Kierkegaard has profoundly affected our era. To a considerable extent it represents the argument for a relational deity who is not a hypostasis of reason nor of power, but rather a God who experiences the human condition, who suffers, and who is love. The practical and ethical import of the debate between Feuerbach and Kierkegaard is also representative of a different debate in our era. It represents the difference, if not the synthesis, between theology that starts with humanity, and theology that starts with God. As I have tried to demonstrate, the interpretation of 'love in the context of faith' is no small part of that difference.

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1. This is no new observation, but it seems to be often forgotten. cf. Niels Thulstrup's commentary to Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 1 vii

PART II

TWENTIETH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN LOVE THEOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

LOVES IN CONFLICT - LOVE'S INTEGRITY

The Influence of Anders Nygren upon Twentieth Century Love-Talk, and the Characteristic Response of Some of his Critics.

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Topical Survey

CHAPTER THREE

LOVES IN CONFLICT - LOVE'S INTEGRITY

The Influence of Anders Nygren upon Twentieth Century Theological Love-talk, and the Characteristic Response of Some of his Critics.

As we begin a study of the twentieth century distinctions between eros, agape, caritas, and philein, seeking some pre-eminent ground of commonality between them, it may be important to recall the point at which we left Kierkegaard. In Kierkegaard's critique of romantic love and friendship he asserted that "in the whole of the New Testament there is not found a word about love in the sense in which the poet sings of it and paganism defined it."[1] No one, perhaps not even Kierkegaard himself, has taken this assertion as literally as has Anders Nygren. Nygren's distinction between agape and eros has had a great influence in twentieth century theology. Although his book Agape and Eros has not often been acclaimed without qualification by contemporary theologians, its distinctions have often been uncritically and even unconsciously accepted. The word agape has crept into modern usage in a variety of contexts, often in connotations which do not necessarily agree with the specific definition attributed to it by Nygren. The word eros also has a variety of interpretations in modern thought, even more diverse than in the days of Plato. A critical analysis of both words and of the history of their development indicates the difficulty of arriving at a 'definition' of love. At the same time, the richness of love-talk, and of love as an unlimited idea, beckons us toward a more holistic grasp of its many facets, and toward its greater application.

This chapter will offer a brief exposition of Nygren's view of love, essentially divided into the 'types' of agape and eros, followed by my own critique. We shall then consider John Burnaby's

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1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 59 - John 15:13 possibly calls Kierkegaard's assertion in question: "There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends." The meaning of 'friendship' is a common topic both to the New Testament and classical literature.

re-appraisal of St. Augustine's view of caritas. A few contemporary perspectives will be noted which have arisen in response to Nygren's seminal work. The chapter will conclude with some preliminary foundations for keeping love in holistic focus, based upon modern research.

I. The Influence of Anders Nygren upon the Concept of Love in Christian Theology

1. Motif Analysis

Before the publication of Agape and Eros, Nygren had concerned himself with the problem of theological method. In several works appearing during the early twenties, Nygren tried to establish a 'scientific' basis for theological study. Theology, he asserted, must have its own criteria for meaning and research, independent of other disciplines.[1] According to Nygren, religion purports to deal with the category of 'the eternal' and 'the life of the spirit'. Logical hypotheses associated with religion may not be empirically verifiable, so scientific method, stated in terms of verifiable hypotheses, is inappropriate. Religion cannot be reduced to an ethical casuistry either. Despite Nygren's considerable use of Kant, he could not accept Kant's reduction of religion to reason alone. Least of all could religion be broached in terms of aesthetics. Beauty and feeling, Nygren thought, are subjective criteria applicable to art, but not to faith. Religion demands its own 'science' and to this end, Nygren developed the method of motif-research.

> Motif research is a technique for discovering the fundamental idea or category of a religion. It seeks to set aside what is unique to individual interpreters of a religion and fasten on the elements which are essential and formative. Its procedure is to examine the historical evidence at hand for the understanding of a religion, form a

1. Det Bestaende i kristendomen, Stockholm, 1922; trans. in English as Essence of Christianity in 1960 (London). Also, Die Gultigkeit der religiosen Erfahrung, Gutersloh, 1922; More recently, cf. Meaning and Method, Prolegomena to a Scientific Philosophy of Religion and a Scientific Theology, E.T. Philip S. Watson, Epworth Press, London, 1972.

> hypothesis as to the fundamental element amid all the diverse expositions, and then test the hypothesis by checking it against the evidence. If the facts are not accounted for adequately, the hypothesis must be refined or reformulated. If the hypothesis does stand up to the facts, the indications are that it expresses the fundamental character of the religion being studied and not merely peripheral matters.[1]

Although there have been a few theologians besides Nygren who have attempted to use his method, Nygren himself admits that, after fifty years, motif research is "still in its infancy".[2] The reasons for its slow acceptance seem to hinge on 'the a priori question'. The theologian doing the analysis tends to form his hypotheses on the basis of his own starting point. Although this need not be bad in itself, Nygren's transparent Lutheran assumptions have not helped to convince other theologians that motif research could do the 'scientific' work he has set for it.

E.P. Sanders, in his comprehensive study of Paul and Palestinian Judaism, remarks that motif research ends up necessarily biased in any comparison of religious literature because one corpus of writings is almost always given pre-eminence over a comparative corpus.[3] For Sanders, the outstanding example is the comparison of Paul's writings with Rabbinic literature. Among other characteristics, Paul's writings are shorter and less diverse, more 'available' to scholarship. For Lutherans especially, there tends to be an unbalanced emphasis upon the motif or 'justification by faith' in Paul, which has only occasionally been compared adequately with the motif of ethics and that of Jesus' messianism.[4] When the justification by faith motif lies uppermost in the mind of the researcher, it becomes the

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1. Warren Quanbeck, "Anders Nygren", in Handbook of Modern Theologians, ed. Martin Marty and Dean Peerman, World Publishing Co, New York, 1959.
2. Nygren, Meaning and Method, op. cit. p. 386
3. E.P. Sanders, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, SCM, London, 1977, pp. 11 ff.
4. cf. Günther Bornkamm, Paul, trans. D.M.G. Stalker, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1969; p. 236: "In the Pauline gospel man is not simply conceived as a moral leper..."

determinative motif by which others are judged. In many forms which have preceded Nygren's declaration of the term, 'motif research' has informed and refuted theological hypotheses. As a method it has certainly not outlived its usefulness. As a 'scientific' method, it is doubtful that it could ever be considered such.

2. The method at Work

Bearing in mind that motif analysis has its intrinsic limitations, the way that Nygren puts the method to work is nevertheless admirable. Taking the idea of love as the motif he wants to trace in the Christian religion, Nygren divided his research between the two motifs indicated by the title Agape and Eros.[1] The first part searches out the roots of the general concept of love as it is used by the early Church. He notes immediately that love as it is interpreted by Paul is not only a different word (agape) but also a different idea from the concept (eros) used by Plato and the Greek philosophers. He observes that agape is hardly found as a noun and seldom as a verb outside the New Testament, while the word eros does not appear at all in the New Testament. The implication from this disparity, thinks Nygren, is that for the New Testament writers love as agape meant something different from love as eros. The motif is thus separated into two 'types'. The word eros represents the 'type' of love propounded by Paul, essentially "theocentric" in character, which becomes obscured or compromised in early Christian "syncretism".[2]

The second part of Agape and Eros introduces the concept of nomos which is a motif allied with the Old Testament, recurring in various forms, especially in the writings of the apostolic fathers and the apologists. Christian theology is thus characterized as a struggle for primacy between the three 'types', eros, agape, and nomos.[3] Nomos cannot properly be called love, but since the Jewish literature

1. Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, E.T. Philip S. Watson, Westminster Press, Philadelphia: Part I: "The Christian Idea of Love," 1932; Part II: "The History of the Christian Idea of Love", 1938, 1939; Parts I & II Published in one volume, 1953.
2. ibid. pp. 27 - 41
3. ibid. p. 254

was "the sacred document of Christianity before the New existed" the 'law' of the Old Testament both obscures and helps to interpret the idea of agape.[1] Nygren shows how the three 'types' are assimilated and mixed as the influence of Paul in the church fades and successive thinkers are highlighted. Agape is stressed by Marcion, to the exclusion of the nomos and eros motifs.[2] But the need for order and a philosophical frame of reference in the Church contributed to the climate in which a syncretism of Greek, Jewish, and Christian motifs might flourish. Nygren considers such fathers as Tertullian and Origen to be particularly important for the developing synthesis of motifs which were originally quite distinct from each other.[3]

The tendency toward syncretism reached its early apex in the writings of Augustine, as caritas became yet another 'word' for love, involving subtle interpolations of Greek, Jewish, and Christian thought. The idea of caritas was sustained throughout the medieval period, until Martin Luther was able to 'destroy' the synthesis, and re-assert the primacy of the agape motif. Luther was only able to do this, Nygren thinks, by concentrating upon the original Pauline idea of justification by faith. Hence, at the Reformation, the taint of Greek eros and Jewish nomos was removed, and the originally distinct notion of Christian love in the form of agape was reclaimed in its 'purity'.

Nygren's work has been much criticized,[4] but for the following reasons the impact of his work can hardly be over-estimated.

(1) The precedent of identifying love as the central motif in Christian theology has been implicitly or explicitly followed by many of

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1. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 255
2. Nygren notes that Marcion was more consistent in excluding nomos than eros. cf. Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 331
3. ibid. pp. 313, 336 ff.
4. Critiques of Nygren have been formulated on methodological, historical, theological and philosophical grounds. Concise and comprehensive is Gustaf Wingren's Theology in Conflict, Muhlenberg Press, 1958 E.T. Eric Wahlstrom, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh and London. cf. also Charles W. Kegley, ed., The Philosophy and Theology of Anders Nygren, London and Amsterdam 1970.

this century's theologians. The attempt to identify some special character in Christian love is not limited to a 'neoorthodox' theology, such as Nygren has represented, but it also informs the agenda of diverse points of view.

(2) Nygren's unambiguous association of God's love with grace is of such a radical nature that a tacit identity of the two is connoted in his usage of agape. The term has thereby attained a certain 'technical' meaning with wider applications outside the field of theology. For example, in moral philosophy, the term agape has come to mean a type of love which is completely altruistic, sacrificial, and disinterested.[1] The idea of agape has thus facilitated a way of talking about love as an ideal, even when it is not manifestly associated with the idea of God.

(3) The sheer volume of Nygren's research into the idea of love indicates that his work will remain a major resource for the history of love in Christian thought. His comprehensive second part to Agape and Eros, detailing the love-emphasis of many of the church fathers as well as many relatively forgotton thinkers (such as Proclus, Johannes Climacus, and Erigena) makes available many antecedents of lovetalk which are largely inaccessible to modern students unskilled in ancient languages. Despite a certain bias in his interpretation, his historical documentation is indispensable to an informed discussion of the development of the idea of love in Christian theology.

(4) Certainly not least in importance is the significance of Nygren's assertive audacity in proposing definitive motifs by which love in Christian thought should be interpreted. Such declarations as, "Agape is the love which wants to give, Eros is the love which wants to get" and "Eros ascends, Agape descends" are the stuff of a rich and

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1. Although the notion of agape has certainly had its greatest influence in Christian ethics, it may be true that any moral philosophy has something of religion in its sphere. Certainly wherever Kant has anything to do with moral philosophy and its background, the idea of love is not remote. For uses of agape which are ethical in context, yet not necessarily religious, cf. Gene Outka, Agape, An Ethical Analysis, op. cit. and Joseph Fletcher, Moral Responsibility, SCM, 1967, p. 57

extended debate. Theologians who have wished to criticize Nygren have been forced to work out their own references to love in the light of his uncompromising assertions. Theology does not operate in a vacuum of equivocations, and Nygren's courage in providing a charged atmosphere for discussion and scholorship should not go unappreciated.

3. Agape: "Expression of a Life-force"?

In sympathy with Nygren's method, Ulrich Mack has asserted that "Das Grundmotiv ist ja nicht nur heuristiches Princip, sondern Ausdruck einer Lebensmacht."[1] As Nygren has interpreted the idea of agape it represents a radical transformation of love in and through Christian faith. Although Nygren is hesitant to confirm his relationship to Kierkegaard in this respect, there is little doubt that Kierkegaard's writings have influenced Nygren's view of Christian love.[2] Nygren is fond of repeating Nietzsche's assertion that Christianity represents "the transvaluation of all ancient values".[3] The change in religious emphasis from an acquisitive, egocentric love to a selfgiving, theocentric love in Christianity represents for Nygren a radical principle enfolding both faith and ethics. For him there is no doubt that Paul the Apostle set himself the task of changing the emphasis in religion from eros and nomos to agape, the love which is revealed in the creative, spontaneous love of Christ. Agape becomes the foundational motif of Christian religion. It not only informs the way in which a Christian should worship, but also the way in which a believer should act. "Faith active in love" becomes the new principle of religion.

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1. Ulrich Mack, Tendenzen der Theologie in Zwanzigsten Jahrhundert p, 328 ("The ground-motif is not only a heuristic principle, but also the expression of a life-force.") cf. "Motivforschung als theologische Methode" in Neue Zeitschrift fur systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie, 1965, pp. 274-296 The article is based upon Mack's unpublished dissertation (Heidelberg) by the same title.
2. But probably only to the extent that Kierkegaard agrees with Luther. S.K. is too much an 'existentialist' for Nygren's liking. There is too much Kierkegaard in Nygren to ignore, but the relationship is often strained and cannot easily be characterized.
3. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 29 inter alia.

The 'eros piety' of hellenistic religion is characterized by Nygren as an essentially egocentric ethical system. The Platonic and Aristotelian idea of 'the good' is orientated, he thinks towards the happiness of the individual. Nygren interprets the idea of 'the good' as intrinsically selfish. "Eudaemonia" is, in Greek thought, a search for whatever constitutes highest happiness for the individual. Love for God, according to this precept, becomes a means to the end of one's own greater happiness; hence its motivation is selflove. In Christianity, however, this egocentrism is transformed into "theocentrism". God is the subject of agape, not the human individual. God's love is "spontaneous" and is not conditioned by any quality in the beloved, nor does it seek its own happiness. In faith the overflowing love of God fills the heart of the believer and proceeds outward to the neighbour. Because it is essentially spontaneous, unconditioned by virtue in the beloved. If love is in any sense 'motivated' it cannot be agape.

For Nygren, "agape is the answer to both the religious and ethical question".[1] The Christian's behaviour, insofar as it is 'Christian', is transformed into unmotivated, spontaneous love of his neighbour with no consideration of his own reward. Insofar as the Christian's love conforms to this precept it is the love of God which is active in him. If his love is in any sense dependent upon the qualities of the beloved then the love is "the love of man", not the love of God; eros, not agape.

The extent to which Christian love may be "spontaneous" constitutes a significant difference between Nygren and Kierkegaard. As we have observed, Kierkegaard stressed that love in the Christian sense is never something to be taken for granted.[2] Self-love always

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1. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 48
2. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. pp. 40-41

remains, for Kierkegaard, something which must be overcome and actively transformed. Hence love of the neighbour is something which must be willed; it must be enshrined in "duty to love". Only through performing the duty, can love ever become in any sense 'spontaneous', and then, for Kierkegaard, only partially. Nygren, on the other hand, assumes a direct transfer of God's spontaneous love through the believer. If love is not overflowing and spontaneous, according to Nygren, it is not agape.

The difference between Nygren and Kierkegaard on the point of love's spontaneity raises huge questions about an identification of love with the concerns of human justice. Although Kierkegaard's idea of love as a "duty" has something of the Kantian imperative about it, and thereby seems to denigrate the spontaneity of love, love-as-duty in Kierkegaard's sense takes account of the theoretical idealism which historically has rendered Christian love ineffective. Even Kant had acknowledged that "love cannot be commanded" and Hegel had followed in announcing that "love itself pronounces no imperative."[1] Kierkegaard's assertion that love is indeed commanded by 'the royal law' is an attempt to hold love for the neighbour as oneself. Nygren, however, insists that human agape must always be "spontaneous", and can never be subject to "duty", since God's love is "unmotivated" and "unconditioned" by value.

The impact of Nygren's view is first of all a problem of theodicy. If it is God's love which is conducted through the believer's spontaneous love for the neighbour, why is Christian love so ineffective at reducing evil and facilitating justice? Secondly, the pure spontaneity of agape raises, and does not solve, as Nygren thinks, many ethical questions. The assumption that our (Christian)

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1. cf. Hegel, Early Theological Writings, trans. T.M. Knox, op. cit. p. 247. Hegel says: "Of course love cannot be commanded."

love is spontaneous takes away the imperative to love those whom we may not 'spontaneously' love. Of course, Nygren might say that if we do not 'spontaneously' love our enemies, then we are still under the influence of *eros*. But the history of Christian attempts to love is so chequered that such an *assumed* spontaneity of loving is, at best, a hazardous assumption. If love, in *this* world, is to be interpreted by its capacity to create justice, Kierkegaard's cautious approach to spontaneous love seems to have much to recommend it.[1]

Nevertheless, there is a sense in which love, if it is to be construed in the sense of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, must be 'spontaneous' compassion if justice is to come of it.[2] This question must be considered further; for the moment we can only observe the difficulty of the problem.

Nygren is careful to disclaim any connection between 'vulgar *eros*' and Christian *agape*. He claims that Plato "did all in his power" to separate the philosophical idea of *eros* from that which was in the purvey of the mystery religions. Nygren cites *The Phaedrus* as Plato's attempt to give the soul 'wings', to take it back to its divine source.[3] *Eros* as a spiritual (or intellectual) attribute was to be divorced from all connections with bodily appetites. Plato's separation of 'vulgar *eros*' from the 'heavenly *eros*' is seen by Nygren as the powerful philosophical departure which would make Platonic *eros* a fit adversary for Christian *agape*. The idea that a person could be in possession of a 'divine' power if it could only be separated from carnal impulses is, in Nygren's view, the root of all mysticism.

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1. For Kierkegaard's view of the limitations of spontaneous love cf. *Works of Love*, op. cit. pp. 46-50. Spontaneous love is not 'eternal' because it can be changed into 'hate', or 'jealousy', or merely changed.
2. According to Luke, Jesus says that the Samaritan's 'heart melted' with compassion. His service to his 'neighbour' did not occur from the motive of duty or obedience to the law. (Luke 10:25-37).
3. Plato, *The Phaedrus* 253; Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, op. cit. p. 172

Through the notion of a spirituality opposed to the flesh, Plato's idea of eros was seen as close enough to similar emphases in Paul's writings to invite many other incursions of Platonism and neoplatonism into the corpus of Christian theology. This 'spiritual' syncretistic tendency Nygren attempts to understand, while disallowing any synthesis of mystery religions, fertility cults, gnosticism, and antinomianism with Christianity. "Between vulgar eros and Christian agape," says Nygren, "there is no connection."[1]

Thus for Nygren, agape and eros come from two entirely different spirtual 'worlds'. They represent two opposite ideas; they are different not in degree, but rather in kind. Nevertheless the history of theology is largely the history of the blending of the two motifs. The confusion of the two was perpetuated in the writings of the early fathers as they were influenced by Alexandrian philosophy, such as the neoplatonic doctrinces of Plotinus. In Origen, Nygren claims to see the two motifs consciously blended, so that Origen, in his commentary on The Song of Songs says that "God is eros" and also "God is agape".[2] The blending of neoplatonism with Christianity resulted in the Augustinian and Thomist syntheses of agape and eros. Caritas, then, according to Nygren, is preserved in the Roman Catholic idea of grace as a mixture of the two original motifs, so synthesized as to obscure its origins.

We shall not have occasion here to fully explore Nygren's assessment of caritas, important though it is for the Christian idea of love.

> In Augustine a new view of love emerges. The meeting of the Eros and Agape motifs produces a characteristic third which is neither Eros nor Agape, but Caritas. Both Eros and Agape have contributed substantially to it, but it is itself new and unique. It is neither the primitive Christian love-motif expressed in terms of a Hellenistic flavour, nor is it the common Eros theory barely concealed under phraseology from the Christian tradition. Caritas

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1. Nygren, ibid. p. 303
2. ibid. pp. 50-51, 198,443

> is, if we may say so, both and neither of these. It is either Eros and Agape, but the synthesis of them; and it is a genuine synthesis, because while it contains elements of both motifs, it is not merely the sum of these, but forms a new, independent unity.[1]

Nygren interprets Augustine, in characterizing the idea of Christian love, to be thinking primarily of love of God.[2] God reveals his love to us so that we may learn to love him rightly. Even love for the neighbour is ultimately referred not to the neighbour, but to God himself. God is "the highest and only good". As Nygren interprets Augustine, "the replacement of the Old Covenant by the New does not mean a radical change in the character of fellowship with God. Man's love to God is still the main thing."[3] For Nygren, the "great and fatal contradiction in Augustine's view of love" was that he tried to maintain both agape and eros at the same time, not realizing that they are mutually opposed to each other.[4] Augustine"never knew Agape in its Christian fulness".[5] Although Nygren has been criticized severely for his interpretation of Augustine,[6] his documentation of Augustine's idea of love merits attention from any student of the Christian concept of love.

The reclamation of the agape motif and the 'destruction' of the caritas synthesis occurred only at Martin Luther's "copernican revolution" in the rediscovery of Paul's writings. According to Nygren, all religion of the eros type is essentially egocentric, characterized by the human's reach 'upwards' toward God. "Luther," says Nygren, "insists, in opposition to all egocentric forms of religion, upon a purely theocentric relation to God".[7] Catholic piety is regarded as the perversion of the deepest meaning of religion,

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1. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 451
2. ibid. p. 453
3. ibid. p. 454
4. ibid. p. 470
5. ibid.
6. cf. the exposition of John Burnaby, below, and the excellent recent work by Oliver O'Donovan: The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1980. (Published too late for adequate inclusion in this chapter)
7. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 681

because it discloses human interest as the motive for piety, worship, and even service. The idea of 'merit' in good works is conditioned by the 'profit' which it yields for the believer. God comprises all the desirable things the human can wish for himself. Nygren says that "Luther's main objection to Catholic piety is always this, that it puts man's own self in God's place."[1]

Against the conception of a love which is acquisitive in nature, egocentric in attitude, Luther asserts a love which is naturally giving and theocentric. The idea of a "theocentric" love suggests a conception of the love of God which is not _for_ God, but _from_ God, especially as revealed in Christ. Any fellowship of humanity with God occurs at God's initiative, ironically on the basis of sin, not of holiness.[2] "If I have no sin, then I need not Christ." "God has nothing to do with holy men. A holy man is a fiction..."[3] Nygren thus draws the distinction between Catholicism, a _caritas_ blend, and Luther, a conception of _agape_ :

> The deepest difference between Catholicism and Luther can be expressed by the following formulae; in Catholicism: fellowship with God on God's own level, on the basis of holiness; in Luther: fellowship with God on our level, on the basis of sin. In Catholicism, it is a question of a fellowship with God motivated by some worth, - produced by the infusion of _caritas_ - to be found in man; in Luther, fellowship with God rests exclusively on God's unmotivated love, jutification is the justification of the sinner, the Christian is _simul iustus et peccator_.[4]

Although Nygren has outlined the _blend_ of _eros_ and _agape_ motifs in Roman Catholic thought, as _caritas_, his characterization of Luther's struggle tacitly identifies _caritas_ as a highly sophisticated form of egocentric _eros_. Luther himself, says Nygren, had personally followed "the Eros Way of salvation in the form of Caritas."[5] "Man is

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1. ibid. p. 682
2. ibid. pp. 684, 687
3. ibid. (quoting Luther) p. 686
4. ibid. p. 690 It appears that Nygren stresses the egocentrism of Roman Catholic piety to a degree which may be considerably over-simplified, in a reduction which may even be an over-simplification of Luther.
5. Nygren, _Agape and Eros_, op. cit 692

justified not by ascending to God in Caritas, but solely by receiving in faith God's love, which has descended to us in Christ. With this, the Caritas-synthesis has fallen to pieces, vanquished by God's Agape."[1]

Having formulated his method and his 'thesis', Nygren is not timid in declaring how Luther's 'destruction of the synthesis' transforms the concept of Christian love. In view of Nygren's interpretation of Luther, and Luther's interpretation of Paul, we are offered some very specific 'contrasts' between Christian agape and acquisitive, non-Christian eros.[2] Nygren asserts that "we have thus two ultimate standards of value confronting one another."[3] In summary of the contrast between them:

Eros is acquisitive	Agape is sacrificial
Eros goes up	Agape comes down
Eros is man's way to God	Agape is God's way to man
Eros is man's effort	Agape is God's grace
Eros is egocentric	Agape is unselfish
Eros seeks divine life	Agape dares to lose its life
Eros is empty and needs to get	Agape is full and flows over
Eros is the love of man	Agape is the love of God
Eros is motivated by quality in the beloved	Agape is unconditioned by quality and spontaneous
Eros recognizes and loves value in its object	Agape loves, creating value in its object.

These specific antitheses leave us little doubt about the inherent dualism in Nygren's idea of love. At no point is it suggested that there may be "a way from eros to agape". The two things are "diametrically opposed". We must now ask whether such a divisive "expression of a life-force" is able to facilitate justice and portray God adequately.

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1. ibid. p. 695
2. Could these contrasts be patterned after Aristotle's list of virtues and vices? cf. Aristotle, Ethics, 1107b 18-20.
3. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 210

4. Agape: Omnibus Dubitandum ?

In his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul was able to affirm that "love (agape)...believes all things."[1] But Nygren's antitheses between agape and the other 'types' of love demonstrate a disjunction which prevents a hopeful belief in many related loves. Nygren's dualism inhibits a conviction that throughout the error and frustration of human attempts to love, God's purpose is yet active to make many different varieties of love work together. For Nygren there is no conception of greater and lesser loves, but rather only of those which are true and false. The exclusive Christian love (agape) is counterposed to all that has passed for love which is not defined in the terms 'spontaneous', 'sacrificial', 'value-creating', and 'unmotivated'. There is no way from eros, (acquisitive love) to agape, just as there is no way from the human to God.

Although Nygren may be right in asserting that it is by God's own initiative that human love "is perfected", there does not seem to be a clear case for the opposition between divine and human loving. Even if God's love is made manifest at the Cross, there seems to be no reason to doubt that God's love is already creative in other, or even lesser, loves. As Kierkegaard said, (quoting Augustine) "love must always be loved forth". Of course Nygren's doubt about loves which are less than the love shown by Christ is somewhat justified. But whenever doubt is as integral to method as in the extreme fashion demonstrated by Nygren, there may be unmanageable repercussions. As Descartes put it:

> He is no more learned who has doubts on many matters than the man who has never thought of them; nay he appears to be less learned if he has formed wrong opinions on any particulars. Hence it were better not to study at all than to occupy one's self with objects of such difficulty that owing to our inability to distinguish true from false we are forced to regard the doubtful as certain...[2]

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1. I Corinthians 13:7
2. Descartes, "Rules for the Direction of the Mind" in The Essential Descartes, New American Library, New York, 1969, p. 37

As Descartes realized, once we begin to make radical distinctions, it becomes more and more difficult to distinguish the true from the false. Although we would not be wise to adopt Descartes' solution, "to trust only what is completely known and incapable of being doubted", we might notice that if we begin with scepticism, it is hard to be able to stop being sceptical. If Christian love is as remote from "vulgar eros" as Nygren has asserted, it occurs to us that a love which only operates 'from above' is also a bit incredible. The agape-eros dualism is essentially a sceptical approach to the idea of love; if the approach is taken to its logical extreme, one might doubt whether there would be anything left of the 'positive' side of God's love. On the other hand, if we are able to stop with Nygren's strict definition of agape, a static concept dependent upon an interpretation from Luther (and through Luther, Paul), it seems that we should be "forced to regard the doubtful as certain".

Of course we must make distinctions, and what love has meant for others must be distilled and adapted to fit our time. Yet, incongruous as it may seem, Paul's assertion that 'love hopes all things and believes all things' seems to be a better starting point for talk about love than deciding beforehand what we shall doubt. Otherwise, perhaps, we must "doubt everything, and believe nothing".[1]

As we shall see, even Paul's idea of agape is itself a synthesis. The notion of a 'pure' or 'original' concept of Christian love is a reduction which does not take sufficient account of either the richness of love-talk within the New Testament, or of the positive contributions of Rabbinic thought to New Testament theology. Insofar as human beings have attempted to characterize the idea of love in

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1. cf. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. pp. 213-230; Despite S.K.'s own radical distinctions, there is a significant difference between his approach and Nygren's. For S.K. only as love "believes all things" does it protect against every deception. S.K. claims that Christian love overcomes the distinctions of various loves, instead of highlighting them.

successive epochs there has indeed been much innovation from creative thinkers. But at the same time, it would appear, ex nihilo nihil fit; there is no 'pure' concept of love.

My criticism of Nygren thus begins with the endemic scepticism in Nygren's approach. Such a criticism must be a careful one, however, for we cannot escape the necessity to make choices. We certainly cannot condone all that has passed for love, and criteria for assessment of different love-ideals are required. But the method of Marcion (significantly acclaimed in many respects by Nygren) is negative and short-sighted.[1] Even in view of the inadequate interpretations of prior generations, we may need to affirm that the character of love is 'one, infinite, and universal'. Preliminary doubts and distinctions must not obscure the essential universality and pervasiveness of the love of God. We need not affirm any particular interpretation as authentic for all time, but neither must we artificially limit new and relevant syntheses. Against Nygren's dualistic scepticism, we may quote both Paul and Luther (interpreted rather too systematically and one-sidedly by Nygren). As we have already noted, Paul asserted that "love...believes all things." His notion of the love of God is one of "breadth and length and height and depth...which surpasses knowledge."[2] For Paul the love of Christ appears more as a universalizing energy than a model for making distinctions.[3] For Luther (who, like Paul, was far from a 'systematic theologian), "Spiritus Sanctus non est scepticus."[4]

In the light of the above general criticism of Nygren's essentially sceptical, dualistic, and artificially exclusive view of love, we may now examine some specific problems which are raised in the distinction of agape from eros.

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1. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. pp. 317 ff.
2. Ephesians 3: 18-19 (Assuming Pauline authorship.)
3. e.g. Romans 8: 28-37
4. Quoted by Helmut Gollwitzer, The Rich Christians and Poor Lazarus, p. 94 (trans. David Cairns, MacMillan, New York. 1968)

5. The Creation of Value by Agape and the Problem of the Fall

The characteristics of agape according to Nygren demand a faith-alone concept of salvation, and an image of humanity which assumes a doctrine of 'the Fall'. Nygren's interpretation of Luther seems to hinge on Luther's statement that the human has no worth in himself, and only "by faith is created in the image of God."[1] God's love must therefore be totally "unmotivated" and "unconditioned by value" since Christ as "the second Adam" was revealed to sinful humanity, having no value in itself which could possibly 'merit' God's love. Agape must be, therefore, unconditioned by the qualities which humanity might deem valuable. It must be "unmotivated" by any value inhering in humanity, but instead bestows value. Only as humanity is loved by God does any value accrue to humanity.[2] Thus agape is a "creative principle", not dependent upon value, but creates value in the person whom loves God.

But the creative principle of agape is still dependent upon faith. Humanity is created in the image of God "by faith". Without faith, apparently, humanity is valueless.[3] Nygren will not accept Harnack's idea that God loves humanity because of "the infinite value in the human soul." Harnack bases his assertion upon the conviction that humanity is created in the image of God; "all who bear a human face are of more value than the whole world."[4] But Nygren says that "if this interpretation of Divine forgiveness and love were correct, God's love would not in the last resort be spontaneous and unmotivated but would have an adequate motive in the infinite value inherent in human nature."[5] For Nygren the forgiveness of sins must be

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1. Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty, op. cit. p. 53
2. Nygren, Agape and Eros, pp. cit. pp. 75-78
3. Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty, op. cit. p. 43 "Faith alone justifies." Nygren is not clear about the extent to which he adopts, Luther's sola fide doctrine, but it seems to be implicit in Nygren's assertion of a valueless humanity. Nevertheless a "universalist tendency" has been noted in Nygren's work. cf. Gene Outka, Agape, op. cit. p. 212
4. Adolf von Harnack, What is Christianity, p.43, quoted in Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p.79 E.T. T.B. Saunders (3rd Edition) Williams & Norgate, London, 1904. G.P. Putnam, New York, 1901.
5. Nygren, Agape and Eros, p.79

"a creative work of divine power".[1] Nygren does not elaborate upon his conception of the Fall, but without it his notion of the lack of value in the creature hardly makes sense, and it is hard to see why he should object so strongly to Harnack's conviction that there is an infinite value in human life as such. The problem centres upon the effectiveness of God's love in the act of creation. There is a problem here which is certainly not limited to Nygren, but which we must try to understand in the whole context of Reformed theology.

In the light of God's work in creation, it is hard to conceive of a creature being completely valueless. Although we may not be able to answer the question, we must ask it: to what extent does sin separate us from the love of God? If God's love, or Nygren's idea of agape, is at all involved in the act of creation, if indeed it is a "creative principle", then it seems that we must cling to some notion of an imago dei. This is not to suggest that alienation between the divine and the human has not occurred, but neither must we too readily assert an abyss into which humanity has fallen. In recognition of this problem Karl Barth has noted that, in the light of God's grace, "every abyss" has a "bottom somewhere".[2] But Nygren has recognized the problem, or at least he has not limited the abyss...

I will try to state this problem in terms which may be oversimplified in order to highlight the dilemma it causes for a broad concept of the love of God.

If agape is a "creative principle" which creates value, then created beings are valuable in the light of God's 'good' creation. The effect of creation indicates a value which announces God's goodness, and the creative energy in God's love. So far God's love may be spontaneous, unmotivated, and creative.

But if creatures are ever to be conceived as 'valueless' and if only God's agape bestows value, then God must have stopped loving his

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1. ibid. p. 80
2. cf. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV/2, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1958, p. 741

creatures. If this happens, then God's love would not be spontaneous and unmotivated, because his love would be negatively conditioned by something the creatures had become or were doing. If God's love bestows value, and creatures have no value, then God must not love his creatures; if he loved them before, then his love is either capricious, or it is somehow negatively conditioned.

Thus, either God's agape is unmotivated by value in the creature, and continues to create value, and humanity has always had value, or God's love is conditioned by human actions, and was thus interrupted at some time (the Fall) by which humanity became worthless.

In summation, Nygren cannot have it both ways. If agape is creative and bestows value, then the very act of creation must bestow some value in humanity. If humanity is ever valueless, God's power to create value is called in question. If God's love is truly "unconditioned by value" then nothing can separate us from the love of God. If his love is truly creative, and unconditioned by value, neither sin nor faith could be conditions which limit or increase the inherent value in the status of being created by a loving God. The Atonement may be conceived as an extension of creative love without implying the lack of a value already present in human life in effect from the original creativity of love. sin may be an alienating factor, but not necessarily an ultimate alienation destructive of created 'value'. The negative aspect of sin, and the positive aspect of faith, are both 'conditions' which might inhibit or increase the effectiveness of God's love. But if human sin is allowed to render creatures 'valueless', then the essential bestowal of 'value' in the act and continuation of creation is called in question.

In any talk about love there is danger in ascribing too many definitive attributes to either the love of humanity or to the love

of God. Such words as 'spontaneous' and 'unmotivated' are finally limiting qualifications which may be subtle inhibitions of the idea of love. 'Spontaneous' is not far from 'capricious'; 'unmotivated' is too near 'uncaused'. These words have diverse and incommensurable meanings when applied to both the love of God and the conceivable relations of humanity. If agape is to be a type of love common to God and (faithful) humans, it is doubtful that the words 'spontaneous' and 'unmotivated' can be definitive for either. God's love may be spontaneous and unmotivated, but it is not clear that it must necessarily be so.[1] For human loves, even under the influence of faith, such modifiers raise more questions than they answer.

Nygren has left implicit and intact Luther's conviction that humanity is created by faith in the image of God.[2] Only by faith does God's grace, God's agape, becomes available to humankind. By faith, God's love is incarnated in the lives of human beings, making valuable that which had become valueless. Such a conception of the love of God indeed stresses the redemptive capacity of God's love, but apparently at the expense of God's creative, sustaining nurture. Perhaps, after all, God's love is conditioned by a value in the object of his love - a value which he himself had originally bestowed, and which not even sin could destroy.

> And God said, "let us make man in our image, after our likeness;..." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.[3]

> And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.[4]

> The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the

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1. cf. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV/2, op. cit p.766. Barth says that God loves "for his own motive...unconditionally".
2. cf. Martin Luther, A Treatise on Christian Liberty, in Classics of Protestantism op. cit. p.53
3. Genesis 1:26-27
4. Genesis 1:31

door; its desire is for you but you (may) master it."[1]

The mark of Cain is the mark of mercy; it is the hopeful climax in a tragic story, a second chance to overcome evil. Even as Cain is banished from the land he goes with the Lord's protection and the hope that he may overcome his sin, as a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth. Neither the fall of Adam nor the fall of Cain destroys the Lord's nurture, despite the seriousness of their sin. Justice is not achieved in Cain's death as a murderer, but rather his responsbility is laid fully upon him: Cain must learn that he is his brother's keeper. Cain does not become the father of nomads, but rather the first builder of a city. In the city of Cain, there is much work to be done, but there is no sign that God's creative and nurturing love has ceased. And in the word of God to Cain is the hope of Cain's city: you may (timeshel) master your sin.

> And God saw everything that he had made, and behold,
> it was very good.[2]

Greater than the fall of Adam was the fall of Cain; but in the nurture of God's creative nurturing love, every abyss has its bottom.

In the light of the original and constantly creative love of God Christian theology cannot easily perpetuate the idea of the Fall without a correlative emphasis upon the sustaining, unfolding elements of redemption. Of course we emphasize the climactic nature of the Atonement, but the Atonement can hardly be conceived outside the context of an evolving revelation of the love of God. An unbalanced emphasis upon faith in Christ may militate against a

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1. Genesis 4:6-7 (John Steinbeck's novel East of Eden was based upon the possibility in the verse. Hebrew scholars disagree about its exact meaning. The hope in the possibility was Steinbeck's interpretation, superseding the ones of an imperative alone.) cf. Steinbeck, East of Eden, Viking Press, New York, 1952.
2. Genesis. 15:31

pervasive concept of God's constantly creative love, particularly evident in the history of the Covenant. Agape revealed at the Cross must be reconciled with agape throughout creation; unless we can see God's love at the cross as a climax, we may never see it as a beginning.

If we are to keep the notion of the Fall as the recognition that humanity is not all that it could have been, nor yet what it may become, I would argue that we should opt for the fall of Cain as a better demonstration of the horror of human sin and God's nurturing grace than the fall of Adam. In the story also is the providential aspect of God's justice as Cain is required to go and find out what it means to be his brother's keeper. Justice for Cain is not retributively accomplished by his death, but distributed in his protection and nurture as he seeks the face of God, a wanderer, a fugitive and a builder of cities. In Cain's founding of the first city (Enoch), and in his fathering of men of craft and culture, there is hope that in the intimacy of human community, his descendants may overcome sin. In the search for the face of God which begins symbolically with the murder of Abel, there is indeed an eros, an attempt to re-establish a lost relationship: "...and from thy face I shall be hidden." But the words are Cain's not God's; in this sense it is Cain's own remorse and not God's hiding of himself which causes the relentless search. The 'Mark of Cain' is the mark of God's mercy and nurture, in the hope that through Cain's wandering, and through the city which he founds, sin may be overcome. In Christian terms, the climax to the story is the Cross. He who seeks, finds; Cain would not be seeking God if he had not, in some sense, already found him. Cain's fall could not separate him from the love of God, but his own remorse hid him from God's face and forced a relentless search for acceptance. Cain's 'eros', or acquisitive search for the face of God, perhaps, was his judgement upon himself.

But God's judgment upon Cain was that Cain was to do better. "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" His own life, and not his sacrifice, was amiss. Even his murder of his brother brought God's promised protection and not God's condemnation, despite its serious consequences. Cain's self-condemnation is rejected by God. "Not so!" is God's word to fallen humanity as it despairs in its fallenness. Terminal judgment is not God's justice; God protects Cain from the condemnation of others and from self-condemnation.

Perhaps God's word to Cain must be repeated, in different forms, in every generation.

> ...sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you may master it.[1]

> Has no one condemned you?...Neither do I condemn you; go and do not sin again.[2]

There is a value in human life which is not to be corrupted either by fallenness or by the consciousness of fallenness. God's love does not merely begin at the Cross. God's justice is not entailed in punishment, but always lies in the hope of a nurtured second chance.

Agape and Eros, as defined by Nygren, perpetuate a dualism in the love of God which implies that there is no hope for the children of Cain unless and until they find the capacity to believe. On the contrary, the love of God which is revealed, not only at the Cross, but also in the story of creation and the history of the Covenant, is a nurturing love, continuing to create value even when humans are not aware of it and cannot believe in it. God's nurture of human life, even in the throes of human sin, is one redemptive aspect of divine love which cannot be totally subjected to a requirement for faith. The possibility that sin may yet be

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1. Genesis 4:7 (The Hebrew word timshel is here interpreted as a possibility, not as a command or a prophecy.)
2. John 8:11

overcome, that relationships of justice are accessible to humanity, remains an indispensable dynamic of God's sustaining, creative love. Through it there is the constant search for God, beckoned perhaps by God himself. Such a search, even if it be called eros, must not too quickly be dismissed or condemned. Cain may only discover what it means to be his brother's keeper if he is protected and nurtured on the way. And in the discovery of his relationship to his brother, he may find the face of God.

6. The Problem of Fellowship with God

An important characteristic of agape, according to Nygren, is its capacity to initiate fellowship with God. Eros on the other hand is characterized by eudaemonism, a search for one's highest good, or highest happiness. Eros is a futile endeavour because (as Nygren interprets one view of Plato) "the gods have everything they need" and do not need the fellowship of mortals. Eros is the human's hopeless attempt to climb "the heavenly ladder", in search of divine fellowship. But since there is no way for humans to reach God through their own attempts, fellowship with God is dependent upon a God who comes to humanity. "Agape is the initiator of fellowship with God." [1]

For Nygren, fellowship with God also implies fellowship with other human beings. The spontaneous love of God for humanity is directed through the believer to the neighbour. Neighbourly love is therefore dependent upon the prior fellowship of God with faithful humanity. Nygren stresses that love of neighbour is a movement towards the neighbour and not towards God. Agape towards the neighbour is not a way of reaching God, but rather it is the effect of being loved by God. Love for God is for Nygren a suspicious idea because

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1. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 80

it is very close to the character of eros, the human's endeavour to reach God in his own interest. A love for God "in the neighbour" is an inadmissible kind of piety, of the eros type. For Christians, love for God should be redefined as faith.

In a novel, and perhaps dubious, interpretation of the commandment to love the neighbour, Nygren asserts that an understanding of the nature of agape enables an understanding of the commandment. Only in acknowledging oneself as being loved by God is it possible to "love" God. And in the recognition, love of neighbour is enabled. "We could never discover the nature of Agape, love in the Christian sense, if we had nothing to guide us but the double command...it is not the commandment that explains the idea of Agape but insight into the Christian conception of Agape which enables us to grasp the Christian meaning of the commandment." [1] The "basis" of the Christian idea of love, by which the commandment to love is to be understood, is the broad identification of the neighbour as an object of God's love. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good;" that is why we are told "love your enemies." [2] In other words, we should love our neighbour not because of a prior conception of self or self-love, but rather simply because God loves all persons. As we are loved by God, our love proceeds outward, indiscriminately and spontaneously toward the neighbour.

Nygren notes that Paul does not use the word agape for the human love for God. "When Paul speaks of Agape he always means the Divine love, never a merely human love." [3] Nygren thinks Paul recognized that human love cannot be "spontaneous and unmotivated" to the same extent as God's love. Thus Paul's notion of ethics, according to Nygren, is of "the love of Christ which constrains

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1. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 63
2. ibid. p. 66
3. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 129

us" (II Cor. 5:14). Love is a kind of "pneumatic fluid" which operates directly through Christians, but the direction is outward toward the neighbour and not back towards God himself. For Nygren, God's love for himself is nonsense. But as God's love is shed abroad in faithful hearts, the holy spirit forms the substance of Christian life, and God's love is directed through the Christian to the neighbour. "The Christian has nothing of his own to give; the love which he shows to his neighbour is the love which God has infused into him."[1]

The extent to which agape as God's love is to be conceived as "infused" into humanity has been a much debated issue. For Nygren, it is an attempt to link, or rather identify, God's grace with Christian ethics. It is faith which enables the direct flow of God's love through humanity.[2] The flow is downward and outward, from God, not toward God. Such a view of grace and ethics is implicitly critical of any pietism which places too much emphasis on human love for God, to the extent that love, as an ethical force from the believer toward the neighbour, is eclipsed. Such pietism would be typed as eros in Nygren's terminology, an essentially egocentric, self-interested love. In an attempt to correct such misguided piety, mysticism, and worship, Nygren has stressed that faith in God is the appropriate relationship from the human to the divine, while only God's love in its over-flowing, downward, and outward character is consistent with the agape preached by Paul.

The critique of pietism demonstrated by Nygren has much to recommend it. Nevertheless, it is a tenuous proposition to suggest that love for God be distilled until only faith is the admissible

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1. ibid. cf. Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty, op. cit. p. 48. Luther assumes a direct assumption of the character of Christ in the character of the believer.
2. Emil Brunner, different in some respects, also represents the neo-orthodox view of ethics in the context of faith. cf. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, trans. Olive Wyon, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1937 pp. 77-79.

response of humanity to God's love.[1] Even if Paul did not use the word agape for the human's love for God, John did.[2] Although Nygren asserts that John was affected by Gnosticism, it is not clear that all of John's talk about love for God must be attributed to encroachment by an early eros-motif.[3] We must also remember that the command to love God is "the first and greatest commandment" in the synoptic gospels. Finally, over against Nygren's caution about love for God we must set the apparent relationship of Jesus' disciples to Jesus himself. Peter's declaration of his love for the Lord was not denounced, but rather it was truned back upon the disciple as a motive for service: If you love me, "feed my sheep."[4] Throughout the New Testament there is constant evidence that Jesus was able to inspire love, and elicit action from those who loved him. It is doubtful that such love can be replaced by faith alone, although an active response must certainly be stressed if any love for God is to express itself as action and justice. (Or is love for Jesus to be held distinct from love for God?)

Implicit in Jesus' command to love God and the neighbour (Mark 12:29 ff.) may be a Rabbinic controversy concerning the correct motive for obeying the law. The Shammaites taught that God should be "feared" and the fear of the Lord was the correct motive for obedience to the Torah. The followers of Hillel, a more 'liberal' school, thought that obedience to the Torah should stem from love for God. Rabbi Eleazor ben Zadok said, "All that you do, do only from love."[5] Was God to be feared and therefore obeyed due to his capacity to punish? Or was God to be loved and obeyed in response to his life-giving mercy (hesed)? Jesus seems to have opted for

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1. cf. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 127
2. I John 2:5; Typically cautious, but without denouncing love for God, the apostle states, "...whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected." cf. also 4:20-21
3. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. pp. 158-159.
4. John 21:15-17
5. E.P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, op. cit. p. 121 cf. Psalm 103:17; God loves those who fear him; compare Deut. 7:6-10 God requires that his people love him and keep his commandments.

the latter, as witnessed by his repeated reference to God as Abba, a loving father. The double nature of the command, to love God and the neighbour, implies a balance which in fact prohibits the purely acquisitive piety of eros. Nygren hastens to prevent any selfish piety, and so overqualifies the first commandment.

As Jesus answers the question put to him by the lawyer, he may be saying that obedience to the law does not stem from fear, but rather from love for God. In the light of love for God, the whole law is tranformed to demand and at the same time enable love for the neighbour. Love for God is love for a 'heavenly father', a paternal figure who would not give a stone when asked for bread, who counts as important the smallest sparrow, and will certainly provide for his creatures. Jesus' whole preaching represents a God who not only shall be loved, but indeed may be loved. Jesus' theology (if we may speak of such) asserts over against the Rabbinic school which proclaimed a fearful lawgiver, a loving father who surely deserves human love.[2]

We must insist that the nurturing, creative love of God is actually preached by Jesus, and does not begin with the crucifixion. In fact, the danger of eros-piety does not appear to be a threat in the context of the community in which Jesus himself lived and preached. National exclusivism and legalism were destructive elements, however, and to these Jesus addressed himself. Such questions as 'Who is my neighbour?' and 'Why do your disciples pick grain on the Sabbath?' were the important ones in Jewish society. But in the Roman dispersion, when the disciples were scattered, it is likely that the problem of eros-piety indeed demanded a continuous interpretation of the love of God. Nevertheless, the eclipse of the command to love God, 'the first and greatest commandment', cannot

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1. Mark 12:28 and parallels; cf. also Leviticus 19:18; Deut 6:5.
2. Luther agrees. cf. Treatise on Christian Liberty, op. cit. p. 54, inter alia.

be asserted without an implicit denial of a God who in his nurturing fatherhood is worthy of human love. The replacement of love by faith offers no defense against the Shammaite doctrine that God was to be feared, and legalistically obeyed. If God is to be loved, we may assert a compassionate deity worthy of our love, and 'omnipotent' in his capacity for loving.[1] Like the disciples of Jesus, it seems that we must be able to love him if we are to keep his commandments.

Kierkegaard stressed that God must be obeyed, and he must be loved. "Truly a profession of faith is not enough."[2] Perhaps only a faith conceived as a "passion", the highest expression of human love, can understand what it means to 'obey' a command to love. Faith, in the sense which Nygren implies, is more an assumption than a passion. In faith, he suggests, we become vessels into which God's love is poured, and the command to love the neighbour is more or less taken for granted, losing its character as "command". God's agape enables directly the spontaneous love of neighbour and enemies; will is no longer required. Nygren's concept of faith seems rather sterile. In a sense it reminds us of the "faith" of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to be baptized by John the Baptist. "Don't think you can excuse yourselves," the Baptist preached, "by saying 'Abraham is our ancestor'. I tell you that God can take these rocks and make descendants for Abraham!"[3] Do the things that will show you have turned from your sins."[4] Faith can easily be construed as ideology. Perhaps we might say "Christ is our ancestor", but the command would still be the same. The fruits of repentance and the work of faith are still required; justice requires committed action, perhaps even in recognition of 'duty'.

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1. Omnipotent, that is, in his capacity to break down the barriers which prevent human beings from loving, . cf. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 39
2. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 344
3. Matthew 3:9 (Good News for Modern Man)
4. Matthew 3:8 (ibid).

Nygren is undoubtedly right to question the assumption that 'fellowship with God' may be achieved by mysticism, merit, and other modes of piety which are interpreted as love for God. However, by adopting Luther's rather mechanistic notion of faith, he has posited yet another artificial, or at least, in itself inadequate, proposition. It is naive to suppose that 'faith alone' can provide the realistic basis for the love of one's neighbour as oneself, and the authentic alternative to the commanded love for God. Faith, as Nygren has interpreted it, becomes a 'guarantee' of appropriate human love (agape) corresponding to the commands of Christ. Unfortunately, history is consistent in recording that the faithful have not always loved their neighbours. The idea of 'fellowship with God' cannot, therefore, be divorced from the task and 'duty' entailed in the commandment to love God simultaneously in accord with a persistent effort to love one's fellows justly. There can be no 'magic' in fulfilment of the task.

(7) The Problem of Agape as a Synonym for Grace

In his conclusion to Agape and Eros, Nygren offers us a manifestly Lutheran concept of love and grace.

> Everything in creation obeys the law of love. There is no tree that bears fruit for its own use; the sun does not shine for itself. It is only man and the devil who in everything seek their own. So far from self-love being a natural ordinance of God in nature, it is a devilish perversion. That which in all things only seeks its own, is thereby closed against God. But when through faith man becomes open to God, the love from on high obtains a free course to and through him. He becomes a "tube," which by faith receives everything from God's love and then allows the Devine love to stream out over the world. God's love has made a new way for itself down to lost humanity. Once for all, and in a decisive manner, this has come to pass through Christ.[1]

There are so many problems in this passage that it is difficult to believe that Nygren can really be serious, or that all of his

1. Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. pp. 740-741

excellent scholarship has come to such a conclusion.

As Nygren himself alludes, creation is indeed inconsistent in 'obeying' the law of love; to subject all acquisitive love to an exclusively 'Christian' concept of self-giving may be a denial of the 'goodness' in creation and in all natural life. To say that the tree does not bear fruit for its own use is to ignore eros in the pips; procreation and self-maintenance are the proviso of existence. The alliance of "man and the devil" seems to be an unsubtle denial that creation is good. The "develish perversion" of self-love may be appropriate to the extremes of hubris, but we must remember Augustine's and Kierkegaard's insistence that it is possible to love oneself "in the right way". If things which "seek their own" are "thereby closed against God", we must forget a God of the Covenant who nurtures and protects his people even in their sin. In Nygren's concern to deny eros he has also denied God's role as a continuous creator and sustainer. Humanity is thrown back upon its own devices, until the miraculous button of faith is found, and God springs to life. The "up" and "down" language, like references to "the devil", and man as a "tube", while certainly colourful, do not contribute very much to an understanding of the meaning of love in the Christian sense. Of course much of this language comes directly from Luther. The passage demonstrates, as Barth has noted in a different context, that "we can no longer repeat these things from Luther without some caution".[1]

Regarding Nygren's conception of man as a "tube" through which God's love is funnelled to the neighbour, there are many difficulties.[2] The first problem of what we might call 'tubular grace' is the question of freedom. Even if "service is perfect freedom" as Luther contended, we must ask about the extent to which God's love can

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1. Karl Barth, Introduction to Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, Harper, 1957, pp. xxii-xxiii.
2. Nygren, Agape and Eros, p. 129; Man is a "tube" through which God's agape is "infused." This is different from the Roman Catholic concept of infused grace, but the contrast is too complex to explore here.

inhabit human will. Paul's ambivalence to the problem is ignored by Nygren. Paul found, despite the outpouring love of the spirit, that the good he would do he did not, and the evil he would not do, he did.[1] In Paul's writings there is always this tension, and exactly because of it one must be justified by grace. For Paul the spirit helps in human weakness, but there never seems to be a total identification of the human will with the will of God. Nygren, on the other hand, holds to a rather mechanistic idea of grace, "infused" into the believer as God's own agape. God's love is allowed, through faith, "a free course" by which "to stream out over the world" through the conforming will of the Christian. Theoretically one might appreciate the ideal; practically one must acknowledge a tragic, historically obvious distinction between the divine and the human. Faith has never been a guarantee of love and justice in this world. As Karl Barth has drily noted, "Man is not a pipe..."[2] If God's love is at all "infused" into human beings, it must not be in such a way as to identify God's will with tragic human actions. If faith were able to join human action with divine agape to the extent that Nygren suggests, then we should end with a determinism in human loving, which, even if it were consistently creative of justice (and there is no evidence that it could be), would be the tacit denial of human responsibility and freedom once faith has been acquired.

Notwithstanding the loaded terms Nygren has adopted from Luther, I will attempt a fair appraisal of Nygren's notion of agape as another term for grace. God's downstreaming love (agape) is received by the person who is able (somehow) to acknowledge it. The reception of agape is transformed into faith in the believer, which initiates

1. cf. Romans 5:5; 7:18 A comparison of these two passages illustrates the tension in Paul. Paul was not so naive as Nygren seems to suggest.
2. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV 2, p. 776

fellowship with God. This faith, properly, is not to be called love, for God's love need not be returned to him. But through faith in God a 'valve' is opened by which the love of God which has filled the believer is able to flow outward to the neighbour. The believer's love for his neighbour becomes thus 'spontaneous' and 'unmotivated' exactly like God's overflowing love. The love is not conditioned by any quality in the neighbour, but rather creates value insofar as it is God's agape which fills the believer and which is directed outwards. Human self-love vanishes, and it is only in the background as a prior condition, as the believer realizes that he himself has nothing to give to the neighbour that is not already God's gift to him. The agape shown to the neighbour is thus "the sacrificial, self-giving majesty of love" which is bestowed on the believer by Christ.

The following deficiencies may now be listed as a summary critique of Nygren's notion of agape.

(1) Human freedom and responsibility are so essential to existence that they may never be dissolved in this world. God's love may inform human decisions, but some distinction between human will and divine love must be preserved. If God's love is equated with Christian love in such a way that there is a direct "tubular" connection, then Christians must be perfect in their love, or else God's love is conditioned by the tragic decisions of Christians. A better correlation of human loves with God's is required, but "God cannot ravish, he can only woo."[1]

(2) There does not seem to be a manifestly evident need to assert that either God's love or the human's must be without motive and spontaneous. Some motives are certainly better than others; some loves may be spontaneous, but perhaps others must be willed. Such

1. C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, MacMillan, New York, 1961, p. 38

qualifiers are presumptious in attempting to describe or define God's love, and they do not necessarily correlate with human experience of loving. Love as it is known by humans may never resemble (much less be equated with) the totally sacrificial and selfless love which Nygren calls agape. God may have motives and interests of which we may not be aware. Thus even to speak of God's agape as always spontaneous, unmotivated and sacrificial may indicate ignorance that God may actually enjoy his creatures. Perhaps there is an eros in God's own love which is missed in our talk about his selflessness and sacrifice.[1]

(3) Grace which occurs 'once for all' at the crucifixion, and which is activated by 'faith alone' appears to be an inadequate 'type' of grace. God's nurturing, covenanted love is preached by Jesus, and it is certainly a continuous theme in Judaeo-Christian thought. The human search for God cannot summarily be dismissed as egocentric, although it has often assumed egocentric forms. Eros and agape, if distinguished at all, must come together in the Atonement, a climax to the often frustrated search for God, consummated by God's revelation of himself. The Cross is not a denial of God's nurture but rather a confirmation of it. God's grace, the Cross proclaims, is not to be interrupted by human sin. Rather, through grace, we are led to the spot where God comes to meet us at the Cross. Faith cannot be the button we press to activate God's love.

(4) Given the proclamation of a God covenanted to his creation, who continuously creates and nurtures his creatures, the request for a choice between agape and eros is a wrongly stated question. Nygren has 'loaded the dice' in favour of a certain, limited idea of grace. Agape according to Nygren excludes the creative influence of God through most of the experiences which human beings call love.

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1. cf. below, chapter six; and Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, op. cit.

God's love conceived as always a "downward" movement militates against the possibility of a teleology through love's gradual perfection as humans come to understand more about love. Love's practice, in the terms Nygren has defined it, is not a human practice at all. It is directly the practice of God, set over against the practice of humanity. It is an ideal which is incredible, and because it is incredible it perpetuates alienation between possible human love and the love of God. An adequate view of grace based upon the love of God must see it as able to support and sustain humanity, enabling the practical improvement of inadequate loves. If love may be 'perfected' so that justice is constantly in progress, a strict division between human love (eros) and divine love (agape) prejudges every attempt to bring a slightly greater justice to a world steeped in frustration. Justice arises through persistent endeavour, and not through the 'magic' of faith, or an imaginary concept of divine love. Only if our imperfect loves are undergirded by God's nurturing, supportive love, and beckoned by the precept of Christ, may we avoid sinking into despair. If reconciliation between human beings with each other, and between humanity and God, is to be possible even on a minimal level, then eros and agape must not remain in conflict. The creation of justice depends not only on the love of God, but upon the human capacity to put inadequate loves to work with tools at hand. Through a creative and nurturing grace, enabling increasing justice in a frustrated world - a 'better' if not a 'perfect' love - the distinction between eros and agape essentially dissolves.

God's word to Cain is his word to an unjust world. "Sin couches at the door...but you may master it." The mark of Cain is our protection and our hope. Fallenness is no excuse. By the sweat of our brow we must learn to be our brother's keeper. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, but neither can God's love alone perform our task.

II. John Burnaby on St. Augustine's Concept of Caritas

1. The Summum Bonum: a Bonum Commune

In driving a wedge between agape and eros Nygren may have over-estimated the originality of Martin Luther and underestimated the contribution of Augustine to Luther's thought. In criticism of Nygren, John Burnaby says, "Augustine, whom Luther esteemed next to Holy Writ," is not so easily categorized as Nygren has assumed. "Nygren's work," says Burnaby, "suffers from its unnecessary and quite unjustified claim to historical objectivity."[1] As Burnaby illustrates, Augustine's changing ideas provided Luther with many of the essential elements of reformed theology. Luther was often able to state directly what Augustine seems to have been saying indirectly. He was also able to identify gaps in Augustine's thinking as any good Augustinian scholar should be able to do. In Burnaby's interpretation, the difference between Luther and Augustine may be somewhat over-simplified. Nevertheless a brief look at Burnaby's Augustine may highlight the reductionism in Nygren's interpretation. For our purposes, we may notice that no one concept of love is ever free from the influence of others.

Burnaby is concerned that the neo-orthodox fervour against private piety may undermine worship. Since for Nygren love for God is to be construed as faith, Burnaby expresses dismay that the whole tradition of Christian mystical contemplation is endangered. "Why," he asks, "cannot life be both from and towards God?"[2] Nygren assumes that any love for God expressed as such has a "private good" (bonum privatum) as its ground. But Burnaby shows that in Augustine's works self-love is not necessarily egocentric. Proper self-love proceeds from a conception of the "highest good" (summum bonum) in terms of a "communal good" (bonum commune). The highest good is symbolized in the community which is the Church. For Augustine,

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1. John Burnaby, Amor Dei, Hodder and Stoughton, 1938, p. 15
2. ibid.

contemplation was always to be undertaken within such a body. "When joy is felt with many, the joy in each individual is the fuller."[1] Such a 'value', Burnaby says, is indeed appropriate for humans to pursue, not egocentric as Nygren asserts. This view of a communal 'good' seems a valid criticism of Nygren. Already in Plato and Aristotle the idea of the good is often interpreted within the context of a community. Eudaemonism may be so conceived as to be possible only in the context of the happiness of others. As Augustine says, "no salvation is without others."[2]

If human love for God may be conceived so that it includes God's felt and active presence in a community, Burnaby asserts that there need be no opposition between agape and eros.

> It does not follow that eros and agape are by nature completely antithetic, that they are "two opposite attitudes to life," or that "an enquiry which seeks to define the essential difference between eros and agape is compelled to view them primarily as rivals or enemies." On the contrary, one who believes that God's providence has never ceased to guide and govern the world he created would naturally draw the inference that if God has given himself to men in Christ, it is because men need him, and that consciousness of the need, so far from being an obstacle to acceptance of the gift, is its necessary condition.[3]

Burnaby suggests that the true conception of New Testament love is better disclosed in the word philia, despite its association with Aristotle, because "it is strange neither to the Old Testament nor to the New." Reciprocal love between Christ and the Father, and between the Father and his creatures, through Christ, seems, to Burnaby, to be a better declaration of the Old Testament covenant's fulfilment than either a one-way eros or a one-way agape.[4] For Burnaby the goal of philia is John 18:23: "...that they may be one, even as we are one,...that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may

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1. Burnaby, Amor Dei, op. cit. 128; Augustine, Confessions VIII 9
2. Augustine, Sermones ad populum, 17:2 (cf. Verbraken, Etudes Critiques)
3. Burnaby, Amor Dei, op. cit. p. 16
4. ibid. p. 17; In light of modern research, an emphasis upon philia in a biblical context is probably incorrect, without due attention to the conceptual and linguistic development of the term. The word philia only occurs once in the NT, (James 4:4). To ascribe an Aristotelian or Philonic interpretation to philos/philein is inadequate for Koine Greek. Both agape and philos are capable of variant meanings in the NT. (cf. below pp. 58-59)

be in them, and I in them." The 'love' in this quotation is literally agape, but the idea is mutual love. John McIntyre has corrcborated the assertion that this quotation seriously calls Nygren's whole interpretation of love in question.[1] If God loves the Son, and the Son the Father, then God also loves the disciples and would expect to be loved by the disciples, also as they love each other. Though Nygren suspects that John was influenced by Gnosticism, the ideal of mutual love cannot be distilled to eros. Nor can the mutual agape between the Father and the Son be construed to mean the Father's love, but the Son's faith. Nygren has left no room for perfected mutual love, the hope of the Old Testament covenant, as Burnaby has observed.

Although Burnaby thinks that philia is the better term for the ideal love of the New Testament, he maintains that Augustine's idea of caritas contains Christian values which cannot be sustained by the agape/eros dualism. " Neither eros nor agape nor the two together will account for caritas without remainder."[2] Augustine's idea of caritas is generally, but not always, equivalent to his idea of amor Dei. Generally the two terms represent in Augustine's thought the communal "mystery of the divine Being - the Holy Spirit of unity".[3]

Burnaby tells us that caritas is grounded upon Augustine's principle of divine immutability. The concept of a changeless deity was maintained throughout Augustine's career. In his own intense mystical experience, he "saw" God as "eternal truth, true love, beloved eternity".[4] Augustine's influence by neo-platonism and Manichaeanism seems to have affected his interpretation of this experience.[5] He forsook his earthly female lover for the love of

1. John McIntyre, On the Love of God, op. cit. p. 30
2. Burnaby, Amor Dei, op. cit. p. 20 (quoting Berdyaev)
3. ibid. p. 21
4. ibid. p. 31; Augustine, Confessions, VII, 1
5. We cannot put Augustine on the psychiatrist's couch, but neither must we accept his spirit-flesh dualism on the evidence of his 'vision'. For more extensive analyses of Augustine's idea of love, cf. works by Austin Farrer, Paul Ramsey, Daniel Day Williams, John Hick, and Oliver O'Donovan, inter alia.

God, who could not change. Love for fleshly beings was deemed incompatible with love for an eternal Being.

Burnaby notes that for Augustine, amor Dei normally means our love for God, not God's direct love for humanity. In his confrontation with Pelagianism, Augustine took as his chief scriptural argument Romans 5:5 "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which is given to us." But by this he takes St. Paul to mean that our love for God is the effect of the holy spirit. It is not "the love wherewith God loves us, but that by which he makes us his lovers."[1] Burnaby admits that Augustine is exegetically mistaken, yet "in the last analysis, in the deepest sense, it is God's own love which is ours by his gift."[2] This is the hinge of Augustine's idea of grace. Through our human loves we learn that the only proper, (i.e. changeless) object for love is God himself. In our love for God, God's own love is returned to him; he loves himself through our love for him. The capacity for our love of God is love itself, called the holy spirit. The holy spirit is that love whereby the Father loves the Son, and the son the Father, in the unity of the Trinity. Thus love is the very being of God, "shed abroad in our hearts through the holy spirit", and returned to him as our love for God.

God's love for himself does not make sense for Nygren, and perhaps it is a difficult concept. The circular love in the Trinity may illustrate a divine mutual love, but in a sense somewhat removed from human experience. Perhaps we can say these things better today if we speak not of God's self-love, but rather of God's enjoyment of his creatures' love.[3] It seems appropriate for God's love to be reciprocated, but not that he should 'use' his creatures as a means to love himself. In this sense, Nygren may be right to object.

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1. Burnaby, Amor Dei, op. cit. p. 99; Augustine, De Spir. et. Litt. 56
2. ibid.
3. Of course, this might have a serious impact upon Trinitarian doctrine, the nature of which cannot be explored here.

On the other hand, if worship is to be retained, if we are to be inspired to keep God's commands, then we must be able to sense some purpose in loving God. God's love for himself does not seem to be an authentic purpose in human love for God, but the reciprocation of his love may be the completion of a mutuality which we may 'understand'. If we ourselves find loving most enjoyable when it is returned to us, should not God's enjoyment of his loving grace be a component of worship? Yet neither God's sheer 'sacrificial' love (after Luther), nor his love returned to himself (after Augustine), can properly express God's enjoyment in our love for him.[1] But according to our 'thesis' we only love God properly as we love one another. This is the point at which our work for justice becomes God's enjoyment of his love.

2. Self-love and Love for the Neighbour

Nygren maintains, with Luther, that self-love is a perversion of natural order. Augustine asserts a concept of self-love, but essentially, it turns out to be self-negation, until the self 'finds its rest in God'. Augustine's idea of self-love begins with love for God.

> Love God, love your neighbour: God as God, your neighbour as yourself. There is no other equal to God, so that you might be bidden to love God as you love that other. But for your neighbour, you are shown a rule,[2] since you yourself are shown as your neighbour's equal.

Knowing how to love oneself is the key to Augustine's notion of love for the neighbour. If one cannot love oneself properly, then the self and the neighbour are deceived. One must love God first. "Every man loves his neighbour as himself if he loves God; for if he does not love God he does not love himself."[3] Augustine is ambiguous on the topic of self-love, for it is initially self-negation

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1. Augustine speaks of our enjoyment (frui) of God, perhaps of God's enjoyment of humanity, but ambiguously: "Thou hast made us for thyself." For further exposition of this 'divine enjoyment', cf. Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, Yale University Press, 1948
2. Augustine, De Disciplina Christiana 3 (Burnaby, op. cit. p. 116)
3. Augustine Jo. Ev. Tr. 87. 1. (Burnaby, op. cit. p. 117)

in love for God. Similarly he equates love of neighbour with self-love, in a sense which may mean either love for the neighbour (in the usual meaning) or the negation of the neighbour in deference to God.

Burnaby criticizes Nygren's assessment of Augustine's idea of amor, construed by Nygren as a desire to possess. Augustine regards the desire to possess something for oneself as the perversion of self-love. Burnaby says that what Nygren is really talking about is cupiditas, which is a false self-love, the result of pride. Real self-love, according to Augustine, acknowledges the priority of God, and in loving God in fact loves the self through amor Dei. Thus Nygren has misinterpreted Augustine, Burnaby suggests, to show that love for God is always egocentric. Burnaby identifies three meanings of self-love in use by Augustine.

(1) Augustine acknowledges an innate self-preservation instinct, the Stoic prima vox naturae. "It is the primitive expression of the principle of individuality, the reflection in the creature of the absolute unity of God upon whom the being of the individual is dependent."[1] The moral value of this "first natural voice" is neutral; it is requisite for existence. (This view of self-love may be roughly identified with Plato's concept of vulgar eros.)

(2) But as the natural instinct for preservation becomes a will to power (amor suae potestatis) the sin of pride and "the Fall" result. The desire for preservation becomes a "love of personal pre-eminence" (amor excellentiae propriae). Burnaby notes an acute distinction here between ignorant selfishness and "blasphemous rebellion". "The love of self that runs to the contempt of God is neither egoism nor egocentrism, but 'egotheism'."[2]

(3) Through conversion the individual is constrained to direct his love away from himself to the supreme good (summum bonum) in a

1. Burnaby, Amor Dei, op. cit. p. 118
2. ibid. p. 121

community of believers, which is the only proper love of self, "which must needs bring him to what is lower and poorer". The self, like the neighbour, is to be loved only in relation to God. The more we love God, negating ourselves, the more we love ourselves.[1]

Burnaby asserts that Augustine's formulation of true self-love contradicts Nygren's assumption that love for God is essentially egocentric. The convert must choose to be God's rather than his own; only thus is true self-love possible. Otherwise, self-love is merely cupiditas. Amor sui is properly to be distinguished from cupiditas in the "sacrament" or "sacrifice" of oneself. "By giving yourself to God you will be made good."[2]

I do not think this answer will solve the problem of self-love. We may agree that if the self is negated in deference to God, such a 'sacrifice' cannot simply be refuted as a piety which is only egocentric. Certainly the history of Christian mysticism is filled with examples of justice-creating love for others as well as for God. Jesuits, Carmelites, and Franciscans, for example, have often demonstrated that mysticism and work among the poor are not opposed. On the other hand, if the neighbour is 'negated' in the attempt to deny oneself while struggling to love God, then mysticism may be forced to answer for sins of omission as the poor are not sheltered, fed, clothed, and attended. The charge of 'private piety' may have many variations. In the self-indulgence of an attempt to master self-love (cupiditas) by first loving God, thereby arriving at true self-love (amor sui), the opportunity (and risk!) in loving one's neighbour may be missed. An obsession to avoid self-love (cupiditas) ironically may prevent proper love for God, which according to the 'thesis' of John 15:9-12 'depends' upon the active love of others. One may doubt whether the total self-renunciation of

1. ibid. p. 122; Augustine, De Trin. XII 16, VIII 12
2. Burnaby, Amor Dei; op. cit. p. 123; Augustine, Serm 127.3

which both Augustine and Luther speak is possible or actually required. If it is, there may be something perverted and masochistic about it. Nevertheless both Luther and Augustine assert with Jesus that God may and must be loved.[1] The motive for loving God is not, as Nygren maintains, always and necessarily grounded upon a private good. On the other hand, a negation of self in love for God does not guarantee that God will be loved properly.[2]

Burnaby notes that Augustine's idea of grace underwent a life-long transition which was probably never completed. Perhaps this is also one reason why Augustine's emphasis upon the love of neighbour "in reference to God" appears inconsistent. At times love for the neighbour seems to be a requisite for amor Dei, and at times all human loves seem to be detrimental to the love one must have for God. In De Moribus Ecclasiae, Burnaby observes, Augustine's amor Dei is "almost pure eros" from the mould of neo-platonism. But by the time he wrote The City of God, amor Dei had attained an ethical character quite foreign to the thought of Plotinus. If some 'synthesis' of agape and eros is represented here, perhaps we need not be afraid of it:

> As charity (caritas) grows in you, working upon you and recalling you to the likeness of God, it extends even to enemies...The measure of your growth in charity is the measure of your growth toward the likeness, and in that measure you begin to be conscious of God.[3]

Of course in any conception of an imago Dei there are many difficulties, and we may not raise them here. The point that we must observe, however, is that such an 'image' (or 'likeness') may be conceived as relative to the human capacity to love rightly, which "extends

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1. cf. Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty, op. cit. p. 54: "For since by faith the soul is cleansed and made a lover of God, it desires that all things, and especially its own body, shall be as pure as itself so that all things may join with it in loving and praising God." This quote from Luther, which might have been written by Augustine, may be enough to wreck Nygren's case against love for God.
2. Of course, self-negation is intended to result in eminent self-fulfilment, or amor sui. The problem of various senses in which Augustine uses the term, and the idea of self-love which it raises for theology, cannot be further explored here. For a much more comprehensive examination of Augustine's 'concept' of self-love, cf. Oliver O'Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, op. cit. O'Donovan concludes that it is difficult to speak of one concept of self-love for Augustine. But the idea has had a wide discussion in theology, and hence is likely to be perpetuated.
3. Burnaby, Amor Dei op. cit. p. 81; Augustine, En. in Ps. XCIX. 5

even to enemies". Augustine has noticed, even if he has not consistently maintained, a nurturing element in God's love which enables and influences appropriate human loving. The measure of growth in love becomes the measure of the imago Dei in humanity. But such growth may not be taken for granted.

God's grace, for Augustine, was never a certainty, though it was certainly an influence. To Pelagius he wrote, "Make neither of your own righteousness a safe conduct to heaven, nor of God's mercy a safe conduct to sin." Our 'perfection', he said, is related to our humility. Augustine's emphasis upon the humility of Christ is "the pith and sinew of his theology".[1] "Because you could not go to him, he comes to you."

Nevertheless, Augustine's emphasis upon God's immutability prevents any consistent doctrine that God is related to his creation.[2] Yet there is indeed a relational aspect in "the power of love to call forth love". The very purpose of the Incarnation is "to show the love of God". Such an idea of grace probably cannot be reconciled with Augustine's emphasis upon God's retributive justice and punishment, despite his remark that "God's justice is not our justice." For Augustine God remains impassible, unhurt by human sin; his idea of Christ's passion does not abolish punishment, for God "must" punish evil. (Augustine's theodicy is a huge discussion, which may not detain us.)

In summary, Augustine is inconsistent in many respects; but his idea of love and grace is capable of rich and varied interpretation.[3] Burnaby, I think, has proven his case that Nygren has not done justice to Augustine. He has also demonstrated that agape

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1. Burnaby, ibid. p. 171; (quoting Harnack)
2. That is, if God cannot change or suffer, in spite of a declaration that he loves, his relatedness is limited.
3. Augustine's idea of caritas, and the concept of grace to which it is intimately related, is preserved in many varieties of modern Roman Catholic theology. Especially significant is the interpretation of charity (caritas, caridad) in contemporary Latin American theology of liberation. cf. below, Chapter 5.

and *eros* need not be opposed to each other.[1] Self-love is not always a *vitiosus amor*. God may be loved without injustice to the neighbour. Christian piety need not be egocentric. Ideal love is, if not connoted by the Greek term *philia*, at least capable of some form of mutuality. (Nygren's view obscures the possibility of a proper reciprocity in Christian love.)

The appeal of St. Augustine to the Christian centuries is more attributable to the passion in his expression than to the system in his thought. Obviously we must not adopt all his assertions, for to a certain extent he was a product of the battles he had to fight, the opponents he had to face, and the philosophies of his era. His struggle for the survival of the Church is not the same as our struggle for a better and more equal justice for all, in places where the Church has been, as well as in places where it has yet to find vitality. We must leave St. Augustine via a quotation which, despite the difference of his world, transports the intimacy of love and justice across the centuries, "from generation to generation".

> There should be not only the kindness of a giver, but the humility of a server. Brethren, I know not how it is, but when the hand of him who has is laid in the hand of him who has not, the soul of him who gives to the poor feels as it were the touch of common humanity and infirmity. The one gives and the other receives, the server and the served are joined together. It is not misfortune but humility that truly joins us.[2]

Throughout Augustine's thought on love is the assumption that the neighbour is equal to the self. "The love of neighbour desires equals, not unfortunates as recipients." A paternalistic love is not just in the sight of God. Augustine may not be clear whether love for the neighbour is part of *amor Dei* or consequent to it.[3] It may not matter. In the idea of the equality before God of the self and the neighbour, is the stuff of community, of *ecclesia*, of justice, and thus of hope for *human* love.

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1. In Burnaby's view, "*eros* is the creation of *agape*." Burnaby, op. cit. p. 261
2. Augustine, *Serm.* 259.5 (Burnaby, op. cit. p. 132)
3. cf. Paul Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1952. p. 123 (re Augustine) "The neighbour too often seems lost in God, love for neighbour is love for God."

III. Toward Love's Integrity in Christian Theology

Comparison of Nygren's love-motifs with Burnaby's attempt to reinterpret Augustine's idea of caritas implies that while love may not be as fragmented as Nygren has suggested, we must be cautious in re-asserting old syntheses or formulating new ones. Neither a revision of Luther nor of Augustine is likely to tell us what it means to love today. On the other hand, the wealth of modern concepts which have arisen in the twentieth century, purporting to characterize the meaning of love in relation to pschological theory, do not necessarily enlighten theology either.[1]

1. "Some Kind of Unity"

Gustaf Wingren, in his critique of Nygren, has insisted that Nygren's method for analysis of the Christian idea of love is limited in historical and theological insight, because "what the Christian faith means now, in the present, cannot be solved by materials gathered from Luther's writings." "Motif research," he says, "prevents this problem from being properly represented."[2] Biblical interpretation must be contemporary if it is to be good, and no study of the writings of the sixteenth century, nor of the Christian fathers, can alone solve historical or systematic problems. "The question of the significance of the Bible for our time remains unsolved even after the historical problem has been solved."[3] Not only Nygren's method, but any method which artificially limits results and innovative application of the idea of love is likely to prove inadequate. As Wingren says, "It is easy to find 'a method' which enables us to produce a lot of books, but which is so easily workable just because it helps us to skip over the really difficult problems

1. The attempts to synthesize Christian love with, e.g. Freudian ego-psychology and Jungian 'archetypes' have been less than satisfactory. cf. Denis de Rougemont, Passion and Society, E.T. Montgomery Belgion, Faber & Faber, London, 1956. M.C. D'Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love, Faber & Faber, London, 1945, and Appendix , below.
2. Gustaf Wingren, Theology in Conflict, op. cit. p. 154
3. ibid. p. 155

instead of solving them."[1] In order for theology to remain truly interpretive of the contemporary world, it must be willing to enter into discussion with philosophy and "other sciences".

> It then becomes impossible for theology to shut itself up in its own room and engage in descriptions of religious propositions. It is the peculiar feature of Nygren's conception of theology that the relationship between philosophy and theology is at an end after philosophy has given theology "a scientific foundation". No Christian statement can be discussed because it is non-theoretical. But if the Christian assertion is an address to people in the present, a communication intended to collide at certain points with the estimate the hearer makes of himself, then the testing of this interpretation will force theology to consider a number of factors.[2]

Wingren concludes that any theological method must be able to include and consider all relevant material. For the topic of love, we certainly must be careful not to prejudge or exclude a greater revelation before it occurs. Our definitions must always be provisional; our categories must be conceived within the widest possible framework.

Hans Küng has argued for an interpretation of Christian love which he calls "a concrete practical universalism".[3] Küng argues that Christianity must not get bogged down in textual or historical studies to the extent that a technical or exclusive definition becomes the norm for love's interpretation. Jesus' idea of love, Küng thinks, cannot be reduced to a division between selfish and self-giving love. "The distinction between selfish love and true love is not identical with the distinction between eros and agape." The possibility must be considered in which a person might desire another person (i.e. "selfishly") and also be able to give himself. Also, a person who unselfishly loves another might be permitted to desire that other person's love. Küng also objects to Nygren's assertion that love (agape) is not concerned with value. "Is there to be nothing lovable, nothing worth loving, in either lover or beloved?" he asks.[4]

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1. ibid. p. 163
2. Gustaf Wingren, Theology in Conflict, op. cit. p. 166
3. Hans Küng, On Being a Christian, E.T. Edward Quinn, Collins; London, 1978 p. 259
4. ibid. p. 261

In Matt 5:43 an agape form (agapeseis) distinguishes an inadequate kind of love which is exclusive of enemies: "You have learned that they were told, "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy." According to Nygren's view, this inadequate kind of love should call for a form of philein, since it characterizes the love which may be present within a distinct community (cf. Lev. 19:18). But the evangelist (if not Jesus) finds no reason to avoid the use of an agape form in this negative context. Similarly, cf. Matt. 5:46: "If you love only those who love you, what reward can you expect?" The verbs here are "agapesete" and "agapontas". The love referred to is specifically an inadequate form of exclusive mutuality. The inference is that Matthew, at least, accepts agape/agapan as the standard term for love, which requires further contextual interpretation in the light of the Sermon on the Mount, Kung says:

> Jesus in the gospels appears as wholly and entirely human, cuddling children, allowing women to annoint him, aware of a bond of "love" between himself and Lazarus and his sisters: evidently this love does not exclude eros. Jesus calls his disciples "friends". Obviously neither the Old nor the New Testament is interested in the difference between a "heavenly" and an "earthly" love.[1]

Küng has argued briefly but convincingly that Nygren has "overvaluated" agape. Christian love certainly includes love of enemies, but it must also be able to 'understand' the whole human existence of Jesus. Nygren has interjected a false distinction between 'earthly' and 'heavenly' love for which there is no convincing basis in the Gospels. Of course, Küng's Roman Catholic background may be partially responsible for his critique of Nygren, but Küng's criticism is quite consistent with the critique of many Protestants. As John McIntyre agrees, "Nygren's rather over-tidy, over-doctrinaire distinction misrepresents the Gospel."[2] Daniel Day Williams, in a similar vein, has argued that Nygren's assessment of agape is so exclusive

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1. ibid.
2. John McIntyre, On the Love of God, op. cit. p. 30

that there is no provision for relating Christian love to the other "forms" of love which cannot be completely defined either by agape or by eros (such as the Franciscan form of 'service'.)[1]

Seward Hiltner has criticized Nygren for excluding sexuality from agape, as 'vulgar eros' is opposed in every respect to Christianity. "The agape dimension of love should deepen the meaning of sexual relationships, make friendship more significant, and guide us in our aspirations, and thus make our loves into some kind of unity."[2]

Perhaps Hiltner's "some kind of unity" is an expression of a deep intuition about love which many theologians in their various ways have attempted to affirm. Nygren's strict divisions seem to be antithetical to this intuition. Although we must struggle with the various meanings attached to the idea of love in history, in philosophy, in the bible, and now is psychology, there may be something profoundly common in all the diversity. As Feuerbach put it, "love is one, infinite, and universal". To make ontological distinctions out of something which appears universal in nature, though diverse in form, seems an affront to love's integrity.[3] No matter how we dissect it, it must still be more than the sum of its parts.

2. Love's Historical Integrity

The 'theological' usage of the idea of love did not begin with Plato, Plotinus, Paul, or Augustine. In some sense, how we speak of love today has been conditioned by religious love-motifs since the dawn of history. Paul Friedrich, in his book The Meaning

1. Daniel Day Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love, Harper and Row, New York, 1968.
2. Seward Hiltner, Theological Dynamics, Abingdon, Nashville, 1972, p. 142
3. Kierkegaard said that Christianity knows "only one kind of love", but even for Kierkegaard there seemed to be a universal aura about it: "That which in its vast abundance is essentially inexhaustible is also essentially indescribable in its smallest act, simply because essentially it is everywhere wholly present and essentially cannot be described." Works of Love, op. cit. (Foreword)

of Aphrodite, traces the religious idea of love back to the Sumerian poetry of c. 3000 B.C., reflecting even earlier religious usage. He believes there are links between the fertility goddesses of ancient European culture and the more formal cults of the Mediterranean which both Plato and Paul were forced to combat. Herodotus thought Aphrodite was brought by the Phoenicians to the island of Cythera. If Herodotus was right, then the love-goddess would have originated among oriental peoples. Modern archaeological evidence reveals a close similarity between Astarte and Asherah of the Canaanite-Phoenician culture with Aphrodite and Venus of western civilization.[1] Although we are not able to determine precisely when, where, and how the religious adaptation of love began, there is a historical integrity in love's conceptual development which prohibits some arbitrary 'starting point'. So far as archaeology and history lend support to love's theological origins, we must assume that the idea has had profound religious significance since the beginnings of history. It has roots in more than one culture as a cultic expression, and in the beginning, we can only assume that humankind noticed something essentially 'divine' about human relationships. The experience of love may well be the very origin of religion.

When Plato began his attempt to elevate the idea of love (for which the common term was eros in Attic Greek) he had to confront a wide array of myth and cultic usage, not to mention the peculiar sensual approach to aesthetics common in his time. Plato was preceded in philosophical love-talk by Empedocles, an early fifth-century student of Parmenides. Empedocles had asserted that love played a part in the motivation of matter.[2] Love was opposed to strife; love brought order to the elements of earth, air, fire, and water, while strife provoked imbalance and disharmony between them. Love

1. Paul Friedrich, The Meaning of Aphrodite, Chicago University Press, 1978, Chapter 1.
2. cf. M.R. Wright, Empedocles: The Extant Fragments, Yale University press, New Haven and London, 1981, Chapter 2.

and strife battled each other for ascendancy. When love had the upper hand, order appeared to be dominant. When strife was in control, there was chaos. Despite his simplistic cosmology, Empedocles' use of the idea of love is important. Love was seen philosophically as an explanation for potential order in the universe - the creative, benevolent force set opposite chaos. Also, it was a 'scientific' usage because love was seen as the positive force for the integration of matter (earth, air, fire, and water). Love was explained as exercising a physical, material attraction and repulsion. Strife influenced like things in their attraction to other similar things, so that an integration of unlike things could not occur. Love, on the other hand, was the influence of combination, causing things to mix with opposites in the production of greater harmony. In the cosmos the two forces were seen as the dynamics of what has been called "an almost Darwinian theory of natural selection".[1] Nor was the application of love and strife ignored to the phenomena of war and peace, to moral good and evil, and to social progress. Both love and strife were "equal in length and breadth to the cosmos". For Empedocles, the material influence of love in nature was sufficient to displace the need for a creator-God and a moral dictator. Love, therefore, has ancient roots not only in primitive religion, but also in the origins of science and philosophy.

With the rise of the schools of Plato and Aristotle the idea of love received different interpretations indicating the richness of the discussions which must have occurred at the Lycaeum. We must not assume too quickly a particular 'Greek' or 'platonic' idea of love. Plato himself gives us at least seven different interpretations of eros and its nature. Six of these are found in The Symposium, the last of which (Diotima's discourse) is apparently Socrates' (or Plato's) recantation of an earlier position he had

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1. W.K.C. Guthrie, The Greek Philosophers, Methuen, London, 1950, p. 53

maintained in The Phaedrus. Plato seemed to be undecided whether love was or was not 'divine'. Love's relation to beauty and to sexuality had to be considered. Scholars still disagree as to whether Socrates' speech relating the "science of things relating to love" was Plato's last word.[1] Diotima's discourse (told by Socrates) must be compared with Plato's love poems in The Greek Anthology before any pronouncement on the contents of 'platonic love'; and there are many contradictions. Nygren's use of Plato demonstrates no awareness of Plato's use of irony, satire, and paradox. Plato was often inconsistent in talking about eros and Nygren has tried to make him systematic.

In Plato's day especially, the idea of love (eros) was very much in flux. Eros cannot be construed simply by the adjective "egocentric" in light of the concern of both Plato and Aristotle for a community in which the highest good for oneself is also the highest good for one's fellow.[2] Quite probably Plato never arrived at a concept of eros which was totally satisfactory, much less completely consistent with what he had written previously. But to the "madness" (or "passion" if we acknowledge Kierkegaard's "translation") of love he devoted his greatest talents, not the least of which was his skill in irony: "such a madness as this is given by God to man for his highest possible happiness."[3] Perhaps as a posthumous critique of his would-be interpreters, Plato said: "the poetry of sense fades into obscurity before the poetry of madness."[4] Love was Plato's "madness". Perhaps only as a madness, a "passion" which transcends historical and logical consistency, can love ever be attributed the historical integrity which is its due. Nygren's

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1. cf. Plato, The Symposium 201 ff.
2. cf. Plato, The Republic; Aristotle, Ethics
3. Plato, The Phaedrus, 245. Note "given by God". For Nygren eros is always directed toward God. The irony is in the question, "for whose happiness?"
4. ibid. Nygren's interpretation of eros is more appropriate in correlation with Plotinus and neo-platonism.

concept of *eros* is a reductive interpretation of Plato.[1]

A truly historical conception of love must not be limited to ideas arising in western civilization. Eastern thought is pervaded with rich and diverse love-motifs. Although an assessment of the love-talk of other cultures is beyond our scope, we must not assume that love was 'invented' by Europeans, Greeks, or even semitic peoples. Although the Cross may well be a climactic summation of love's history, it is not love's beginning. *Eros* and *agape* are two words for love which have deeply affected Christian theology, but these two words must be set in the context of countless other terms in many languages and cultures, representing a common intuition, and 'experience' for humanity across the centuries. The meaning of love has always been developing, and in the development there must be continuous interpretation and correction. But no correction of a previous idea of love should ever be taken as completely unique or unrelated to the total development of the history of love's interpretation.

3. Love's Biblical Integrity

Nygren's emphasis upon *agape* as the foremost love-motif in the Bible does not give due recognition to the variety of love-talk in the biblical tradition. Of course we may not spend much time here in examination of the idea of love in the Bible, and only a few points may be outlined. Despite the tension between various ideas of love in the Old Testament, and between the Old Testament and the New, a 'Marcionite' solution (such as Nygren's) is liable to raise more hermeneutic and practical problems than it solves. The richness and diversity of love-talk in the Bible is a legacy with which we cannot easily dispense. The idea of the Covenant

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1. *The Symposium* ends with no conclusion. Aristodemus reports that "Aristophanes, Agathon, and Socrates had alone stood it out, and were still drinking out of a great goblet which they passed round and round." (223). Aristophanes represented love as sexuality; Agathon represented beauty and wisdom; Socrates, the medium between them.

is great enough to sustain the many facets of love which the Bible contains, bringing them together with the prophetic call for justice when, at the Cross, the law is fulfilled by love.[1]

Rather than divorcing nomos from agape, James Moffat attempted to keep the two together.

> Love to God means keeping his commands (I John 5:3). This is one of the most characteristic truths in the religious ethic of the Johannine writings. It is never driven home by OT quotations, and yet it sounds like an echo of the OT phrase 'to love God and keep his commandments,' a phrase hardly ever used by the prophets ...but common in the psalter and in the Law, especially in Deuteronomy.[2]

Moffat was also willing to give due credit to the Rabbinic background of the New Testament, upon which much of the use of agape is dependent. Moffatt noted the saying attributed to Rabbi Akiba, "God the Father of both rich and poor, would have the one help the other, and thus make the world a household of love."[3] Despite the frequent tendency toward Jewish exclusivism in the Old Testament, the exceptions do not allow a convenient reduction of Jewish piety to illustrate the universal-nature of agape over against a closed society of the Law. The books of Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Ruth, Jonah, Isaiah, and much of the Psalms demonstrate the formative background of the New Testament's idea of love. The Rabbinic debates also shed much light on the formation of the Christian love-motif, without which it is doubtful that either Jesus or the New Testament writers could have made Old Testament views relevant.[4] The idea of love was in full ferment in Rabbinic theology when Jesus, Paul, and John began to offer their interpretations.

Paul Ramsey has remarked that Nygren's interpretation of Christian love "cannot be refuted by linguistic or merely textual studies

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1. N.H.G. Robinson, (with Wingren) has severely criticized Nygren for reducing the idea of nomos to a Jewish legalistic framework. cf. The Groundwork of Christian Ethics, Collins, London, 1971, pp. 295-296. Robinson remarks that Nygren has forgotten that love is the fulfilment, not the replacement of the law.
2. James Moffatt, Love in the New Testament, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1929, p. 270 (As Nygren attempted to demonstrate, however, nomos and agape may not be reconcilable).
3. Moffatt, Love in the New Testament, op. cit. p. 271
4. cf. above, p.170; E.P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, op. cit. p. 121

of the New Testament".[1] Ramsey may well be correct; however it is fairly certain that Nygren's argument is seriously defective on linguistic grounds, and certainly will not support the perpetuation of a limited definition of agape in exclusion of other meanings used by Christian writers.

In other words, it appears that Nygren has ignored the development of the Greek language to the extent that by Matthew's time at least, the common word for love was agape. Paul's usage of the word probably depends upon its appearance in the Septuagint, but also Paul may have been offering his own interpretation of the Hebrew hesed (mercy, compassion). There is little evidence that the word eros does not appear in the New Testament for any other reason than that the word had simply passed from common usage.[2] Certain literary and philosophical usages for eros may well have survived in alliance with neo-platonism, but the New Testament's use of agape is probably more related to the common (koine) term for love than to any avoidance of neo-platonism.

The New Testament idea of love is distributed primarily between the two words agape and philos. The verb agapan occurs 141 times, and the noun agape 116 times. The verb philein occurs 25 times, the noun philos occurs 29 times. The noun philia (friendship) occurs only once (James 4:4) and its verb philiazein does not occur at all. The verb agapan does not occur at all in Acts, Ephesians, I Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. The noun agape is not used in Luke-Acts or in James.[3] Significantly, Acts incorporates neither agape nor agapan, but it makes considerable use of the philos/philein form.[4] The impact of linguistic studies of the idea of love implies

1. Paul Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics, op. cit. p. 115
2. Victor Paul Furnish, The Love Command in the New Testament, Abingdon, Nashville, 1972; SCM Press, 1973 p. 222; "Already by the time the LXX was produced, agape had begun to be used as an ordinary word for love."
3. R. Morgenthaler, Statistik des Neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes, Gotthelf Verlag, Zürich, 1958 p.67; cf. also Ceslaus Spicq, Agape: Prolegomenes a une Etude de Theologie Neo-Testamentaire, Studia Hellenistica, 10, E. Nauwelaerts, Louvain, 1955.
4. Victor Paul Furnish, The Love Command in the New Testament, op. cit. p. 223

that both language and conception were very much in flux in the New Testament era. There are many instances in which the words are used synonymously.[1] We may speak of a Christian conception of love if we do so with caution; we may not, however, apply to such a conception a technical term derived from the New Testament if the term is attributed a consistent definitional capacity. The Bible knows many terms for love, but each term has always been somewhat open to interpretation.

Paul may have been the most consistent of New Testament writers in using the term agape for Christian love, a love which contains no self-seeking nor demand for mutuality. But the root of Paul's use of agape may well lie in the Hebrew concept of hesed, the covenanted love of God for his people, and required of them. More cosmopolitan, Luke preferred the idea of philos/philein, while John mixed the two, often in such a way that it is difficult to distinguish the difference between agapan and philein (John 21:15-17). Although generally the New Testament shows agape to be self-giving love as Paul has described it (e.g. I Cor. 13, inter alia) and philos/philein to entail some idea of mutuality, the exceptions are so pronounced that one may neither say that agape is always selfless, nor philein always a mutual love.[2]

The idea of love in the Bible cannot be reduced to a closely defined "Christian" concept. It is worth remembering that in the Septuagint, the word agape often has specifically sexual connotation (cf. Song of Songs). We have already noticed that there is indeed a sense in which humanity must 'seek' God, like Cain, learning how to love his fellows in the search. Only by doing so may the evil be vanquished which lurks at the door of the descendants of Cain.

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1. ibid. pp. 224-226; cf. especially John 21:15-17; Luke 11:43; I John 2:15, James 2:23; Titus 3:15; III John 15; Rev. 3:19.
2. ibid. pp. 230-231; Furnish notes that for Luke the verb agapan sometimes means nothing more than 'to prefer' (Luke 11:43).

But the search for God need not be totally selfish, it is not necessarily egocentric. Indeed, it is correlative with a continuous quest after justice, in "the city of Cain". The covenanted love of God for his creatures is the hopeful thread which runs through the Bible preserving humanity in its search and in its sin, connecting the Old Covenant to the New. God's love is not divorced from humanity in human fallenness, but it sustains and continues to create possibilities for the 'perfection' of human loves through interhuman justice. The Bible indeed declares that God is worthy of human love, but at the same time it stresses in many diverse ways what it means to love God properly.

Although the linguistic difficulties remain indecipherable, there may be no better summation of the biblical concept of love than Simon Peter's final conversation with Jesus.

> When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love (agapas) me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love (philo) you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love (agapas) me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love (philo) you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love (phileis) me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love (phileis) me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love (philo) you. "Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."[1]

Perhaps, after all, it is not the term that is important, but the active response. If there is a confrontation of love-motifs in the Bible, it is not between agape and eros, but between agape and philein. The hope of the Covenant is the hope of mutual 'friendly' love between God and humanity; but the hope is only realized as the antipathy between Cain and Abel, between each person and his neighbour, is resolved by a love that persistently creates justice between them.

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1. John 21:15-17 The differences in the terms for love in this passage have been much discussed; (Bultmann's solution to the problem was that the whole final chapter was a late addition.) Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, The Gospel of John, Westminster, Philadelphia, 1971 p. 700

Summary and Implications

In this chapter I have tried to affirm the view of Victor Paul Furnish (and many other contemporary exegetes) who concludes, in the light of various methods of historical and textual research, that "in the New Testament...study of the love ethic cannot be tied exclusively to the passages where the term agape and its cognates appear." One of the main reasons why this is so is because the Bible, as a vital record of numerous points of view, cannot be divorced from 'secular' norms and ideas, some of which have passed from immediate contemporary relevance, and some of which continue to be sustained in new forms of modern usage.

Although we may have many good reasons to question the synthesis of St. Augustine, the sheer fact that his view of caritas is a synthesis has inadvertently, as it were, underlined the difficulty and apparent impossibility of conceiving 'love' in its 'purity'. St. Paul, no less than Plato himself, was forced to grapple with the problem of applying authentic definitive modifiers to the idea of love so that it might be related intimately to changing concepts of God and human 'goodness'. But their task of redefining love, like 'the mantel of Elijah', had been passed to them by others; and to others they too have left it.

In the history of love's development there has been a continuous inclination of its interpreters to conceive love in universal terms. Even Nygren, despite his strict definitions, is a witness to this tendency in many respects. If, however, the intuition of love's universality is to be rationally expounded, then definitions and modifiers which are too 'definitive' may militate against continuing interpretation of love in correspondence with a universal ideal. Thus, with regard to Nygren's modifiers, we must exercise caution. Words like 'spontaneous', 'unconditional', and 'unmotivated' seem only partially able to qualify a type of love which is allegedly

common to God and to faithful humanity. Similarly, when faith becomes a strict determination of human love, we must ask whether love's universality can legitimately be construed "by faith alone".

The intuition that love is creative of value is, in itself, a critique of any limitation or corruption of value in human life which may have occurred through sin. Thus, if the conception of the Atonement is construed so that, prior to it, or without its appropriation 'by faith', humanity is 'valueless', then there is also an implicit denial of goodness in creation itself and in the capacity of human beings, through the continued creative influence of love, to 'better' themselves. Remediation must not totally be subordinated to redemption in conceiving the creative love of God effective through the Incarnation and the Atonement. Remediation of inadequate behaviour and selfish loves may be enshrined within love's creativity, enabled and influenced through a nurturing element in God's grace. The Cross is certainly not remote from the call for remediation, even though, as Luther and Nygren have attested, it cannot be reduced to a 'theology of merit' or salvation by works. Neither can the Cross be conceived consistently as the total replacement of the patient nurture and creativity evident in the history of the Covenant. In ways which may not simply be described, the Cross may represent a comprehensive fulfilment of the Old Testament law; even though nomos and agape appear to be two different emphases in the Judaeo-Christian religious tradition, they are not absolutely antithetical. John McIntyre has possibly identified, if not totally explained, their connection: both love and justice meet at the Atonement. The history of the Covenant, and the tradition of the Torah, after all, have their roots in a call for justice.

The Christian emphasis upon 'love of one's neighbour as oneself' is profoundly expressive of this Old Testament call for justice (cf. Lev. 19:18, 33). Nygren, however, has attempted to affirm the principle without affirming its roots. He has, indeed, expressly

asserted that love and justice are opposed, according to his interpretation of 'The Workers in the Vineyard' (Matt. 20:1-16). Nevertheless, by stringently affirming the radical nature of agape as a type of love which is self-giving, inclined toward others, creative of value, characterized by service, and inclusive of aliens, he has, in another way, affirmed the call for justice which was originally expressed in the Jewish law. Nygren's assertion that agape must be 'unmotivated' also expresses a concern for interhuman justice which may be obscured by religious emphasis upon 'love for God.' Certainly the history of 'vertical' piety has called such a piety in question. Certainly one's love for God cannot be pursued according to a neo-platonic eros at the expense of one's fellows and in ignorance of their needs. To this extent, Nygren's demand that love for the neighbour must have no selfish motives is consistent with the call for justice. In the twentieth century, his emphasis has been further extrapolated throughout the writings of 'neo-orthodox' theologians, and in gratitude to them, theology can no longer speak of 'the love of God' in terms which connote a private, exclusive, and selfish love for God. The expression of 'the love of God' must now have its 'horizontal' effectiveness, and the cause of justice may be served in the process (cf. Chapter Four, following).

But, on the other hand, as our brief look at John Burnaby's reinterpretation of Augustine might demonstrate, there is a place for amor Dei, human love for God, if worship is to continue in a proper balance, if people are to find a capacity for prayer, and if human beings are to discover even in the depths of sin some possibility for a more 'perfect' love and a greater justice on earth. Jesus' disciples loved him, and were asked to demonstrate their love by loving others, by serving them, by behaving towards them as they themselves would like others to treat them, and generally, by following the precepts of Christ and 'obeying' his commands. There was no intimation that the love 'commanded' was to be easy

or 'spontaneous'; there was an intimation that the disciples might show their love for Jesus by doing justice to their brothers, their neighbour, and their enemies. By loving their neighbours, the disciples might 'dwell' in the same love which, by keeping his father's commands, Jesus had shared with God. (John 17:21-23).

APPENDIX I, PART TWO

M.C. D'ARCY: "THE LION AND THE UNICORN"

The critique of Nygren by the Jesuit, M.C. D'Arcy is a very different type of criticism from John Burnaby's reinterpretation of Augustine. D'Arcy attempts to mix mythical, theological, and psychological motifs in such a way as to show that eros and agape are mutually dependent upon each other. Although D'Arcy's work as a critique of Nygren is less that satisfactory, it is worth our attention because it may illustrate the dangers of an over-enthusiastic or overly-complex synthesis of love-images.

Written in 1945, D'Arcy's book The Mind and Heart of Love begins with a discussion of the characterization of love by Anders Nygren and Denis de Rougemont.[1] Nygren essentially dismisses "vulgar eros" as completely antithetical to Christianity, but de Rougemont portrays eros as an ambivalent, dualistic theme pervading the literature of western civilization.[2] For de Rougemont, eros is essentially dualistic in character, and may become either a glorious self-assertion, an élan vital obvious in romance, or it may become a "dark passion" which is tragic and self-destructive. Both themes at once are surveyed in the legends of Apollo and Dionysius, Tristram and Isolde, Arthur and Lancelot, and in the tragedies of Shakespeare. The "dark side of eros" must be allayed by the activity of agape. Eros is self-destructive; only agape can reconcile it with itself. For de Rougemont, the prevention of the "Gnostic solution" which is the denial of human life, takes place only as the neighbour is loved in obedience to God. Agape thus corrects by reason the negative side of eros.

D'Arcy thinks de Rougemont has not fully explained how agape can correct such a powerful and potentially destructive eros. D'Arcy

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1. M.C. D'Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love, Faber and Faber, London, 1945
2. Denis de Rougemont, Passion and Society, E.T. Montgomery Belgion, Faber and Faber, 1956.

suggests that there must be something between "pagan passion" and "supernatural love" which sustains creation. "There must in fact have been a quiet ordered love in all civilizations; one which lacked the specific and supernatural character of Christian agape and yet preserved a balance and discipline."[1] No civilization could be sustained in such a "wild frenzy" as de Rougemont describes pagan eros, and D'Arcy stresses that agape, the "mind" of love must already be at work before it is ever consummated in Christianity.

D'Arcy himself, however, has a sinister notion of natural romantic love, which seems to suggest a warped idea of creation. Without correction by agape, romantic love (eros) tends toward a death wish, a gnostic or manichaean denial of physical existence. The essence of passionate love, he thinks, is to seek the infinite and despise the forms of earthly communion, feeding on its own image like Narcissus.[2] Such an eros finds pleasure "only in the anguish of its absence from the beloved" until its finite longings are rewarded by death and by absorption into the infinite.

It is difficult to see why D'Arcy has such a nihilistic view of eros in its 'natural' form, but he attempts to conflate nihilistic passion with Nygren's idea of eros as a rational search for divinity. "If Nygren be right, once eros is espcused by Plato and platonism, a remarkable metamorphosis takes place. The mythos becomes a logos; what was essentially a wild and irrational passion is converted into an excessively rational religion."[3] With this mixture of the eros of de Rougemont and Nygren, D'Arcy arrives at an 'archetypal' form of eros which is itself essentially dualistic. Conflating passionate eros with spiritual eros, and combining this with certain concepts from Jungian psychology, D'Arcy develops an interpretation of agape and eros as representing the interdependence of essence and existence. For D'Arcy eros has two modes which are contingent upon influence by agape if they are to be guided in a positive direction.

1. D'Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love, op. cit. p. 49
2. ibid. p. 55 3. ibid. p. 67

(1) Eros is the "dark passion" of the tragic myths which is really only happy in its own death. It may also be the tacit denial of physical existence as a "gnostic solution" which excludes the individual from community. This instinct is primitive and powerful, essentially nihilistic, and requires intervention from agape if it is not to lead to destruction.

(2) Eros is also the egocentric presumption of rational control and self-sufficiency. This 'survival instinct' preserves life, yet it may prevent the formation of mutual relationships. Thus unless agape acts upon the survival instinct to create community, survival itself may be forfeited.

D'Arcy thus identifies a 'sensual' and a 'rational' side of eros. The sensual side is 'feminine', associated with the Jungian notion of the anima; the rational side is 'masculine,' associated with Jung's idea of the animus.[1] Each side of eros may be either positive or negative, creative or destructive. The sensual side accounts for the human ability to sympathize with others, to aspire towards God, to experience joy, and to pro-create.[2] The rational side of eros maintains survival, establishes the pre-requisites for security, discerns between good and evil, and accumulates knowledge. But neither the sensual side nor the rational side is sufficient on its own. The interdependence of anima and animus is, for D'Arcy, the measure of human personality upon which any further activity of love as agape, in Nygren's sense, depends.

It is difficult to ascertain the point at which D'Arcy thinks eros stops and agape begins. D'Arcy's criticism of both Nygren and de Rougemont alludes to their attempt to keep agape in opposition

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1. cf. C.G. Jung, Collected Works, ed. H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, Princeton University Press, 1953-1978; especially Vols. 7-9. I doubt whether D'Arcy's adaption of Jung re anima and animus is legitimate.
2. D'Arcy certainly avoids elaborating upon eros which might be allied with joy in sexuality. His concern seems to be unbalanced toward sex as a "dark passion." It seems that there might be somewhat more to say about the natural aspects of sexuality in a hopeful sense. The writings of Proust and D.H. Lawrence are for him "strange literary outpourings." He tells us that "sensation left to itself tends to get monopolized by the dominant current of sex..." leading apparently, to "Aztec blood sacrifices, mystical and savage abandonments of the self, abstract sex-rage, and the intoxicating embrace of mother earth when man returns to it as to the womb." ibid. p. 142

to human nature. D'Arcy tries to put natural human loves together with a sort of divine, maintaining love, such that agape should undergird the natural loves to keep them from becoming self-destructive. For D'Arcy, Nygren's notion of agape is a kind of gnosticism which 'boomerangs' against him.[1] In eliminating eros from faith, human nature is tacitly eliminated also. Only with a concept of self is humanity able to maintain the pre-requisites for the performance of agape. "If the agape be an act which proceeds from man and at the same time has nothing human or free in it, how can that act, which is expressly declared to be divine, by anything less? And if man is literally divine, then we are back at the monism of the ancient gnostic cult." [2]

Nevertheless, D'Arcy does retain the division between agape and eros. Agape remains for him divine love, but given his different concept of grace (i.e. Catholic), it is intimately related to human nature, an 'essence' which informs human 'existence.'

> Our own being, essence and existence, is the school of divine love, and so we must not think of our own being as something of our own which is met by God and then loved. This idea would be quite inadequate and give rise to a host of misunderstandings and false expectations. It would suggest that God is like a finite lover, now loving and now indifferent, now storming his way into our hearts and now lying hidden. All such language must be understood in the context of infinite and creative love, which produced us and keeps us alive. Not new favours, nor new external happenings, nor rapturous experiences are so much a testimony of God's love as our nature and being itself.[3]

Criticizing de Rougemont, D'Arcy says that if eros is equated with the "dark passions" alone and if agape is the rational balance to the destructiveness in these passions, then agape cannot overcome the force of nihilistic passion. The agape of de Rougemont is too rational, too sterile; in fact it resembles the survival mechanism of eros. On the other hand, Nygren's agape is too 'spontaneous',

1. D.Arcy; The Mind and Heart of Love, op. cit., p. 68
2. ibid. p. 80
3. ibid. 341

divorced from human will and freedom; if it is to be 'creative' it must be more closely related to human existence. "Human nature is impoverished at the expense of grace. Eros must include the best in man, which is his reason and will and all the ideal possessive love of which it is capable. To right the balance, therefore, eros should stand for both the ecstatic, irrational, and self-effacing mood of love and the rational self-assertive and possessive love as they are found in human experience; and agape for God's special love and man's response to it as inspirited and energized by it."[1]

D'Arcy argues that the passionate eros rejected by de Rougemont, and the acquisitive, spiritual eros rejected by Nygren are both pre-requisites of and influenced by agape. Agape is neither the rational, forming love of de Rougemont, nor the supra-rational "infusion from above" proposed by Nygren. For D'Arcy, agape represents the divine influence, both 'from below' and 'from above' which works toward the realization of philia, mutual love between humans and between humans and God. Agape does not remove freedom, it is not the eclipse of the ego. "The energy of love, which is God's own, is communicated, and an essentially inferior energy starts repeating the rhythm of the superior one in its own fashion, as when a log thrown into a stream takes on the motion of the stream or a rider on horseback sways up and down to the movement of the horse."[2]

In preserving eros for influence by agape, D'Arcy wants to tell us that it is the "unicorn" - the passionate self, sensual, 'feminine,' and somewhat inclined toward self-sacrifice - which alone can recognize agape and return it. The "lion" - the rational, survival -oriented and practical self- cannot put away its intellect long enough to sense the love of God. If, through the influence of agape the "unicorn" is able to avoid the pitfalls of self-

1. D'Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love, op. cit. p. 325
2. ibid. p. 341 D'Arcy follows Burnaby in stressing philia as the ideal love of the NT, and perpetuates the linguistic error.

destruction, it may be able to affirm God as its essence, without denying its existence, loving God who loved it first. Then, says D'Arcy, "God is all in all, and there is no trace of that kind of self-love which interferes with perfect love. But self is there, the self and the intellect, for it is God who loves them and gives them both increase."[1] In final illustration, D'Arcy concludes with the Spiritual Canticle of St. John of the Cross, in which the sould is empowered to love God even as itself is loved. The memory of St. Augustine is here enshrined; "Our heart is uneasy until it shall find rest in Thee." In such a movement of the soul, influenced by agape all along, D'Arcy says, "All that Nygren demanded is present."[2]

Summary and Critique

In his mystical conclusion, D'Arcy has certainly not demonstrated that "all that Nygren demanded is present." D'Arcy is to be commended for integrating both passion and reason in an eros which is influenced by agape, and which is not opposed to it. Nevertheless, D'Arcy's attempt to show that agape and eros are resolved in philia, especially in a mutual love between God and the (contemplative) human, seems to be flagrantly unconcerned with the demand for justice, and so falls right into Nygren's critique of private piety. Mutual love may certainly be an ideal of the New Testament, but despite God's influence through all eros, the culmination of philia does not find its perfection in love between God and humankind unless there is a correlative just love between human beings. Although D'Arcy has certainly asserted a requisite concept of self which must concern God, an integrated concept of self is still "nothing worth" if it cannot overcome the detriment to love of neighbour which inheres in pride and self-love.

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1. ibid. 344
2. D'Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love, op. cit. p. 344

D'Arcy gives very little attention to sin, and even discounting the fact that he operates from a much different view of grace from Nygren, the incidence of human failure which sabotages idealistic notions of imago Dei must realistically be considered. The problem of self-love of destructive eros, is not finally and directly concerned with whether human beings shall love God, but rather with their capacity to love and serve each other.

The myriad illustrations from myths, phychology, existentialist philosophy, and theology which D'Arcy uses to demonstrate his argument seem to make things too complex. The relation between anima and animus, with their 'feminine' and 'masculine' characteristics, is somewhat offensive in sexual connotation. In any event it is predicated upon a psychological view-point which may have little in common with Christianity, and which is not totally credible in its own sphere. D'Arcy offers us so many concepts of such a diverse nature, that it is often difficult to know what he is talking about. Although we must necessarily make syntheses in talking about love, D'Arcy's mixed metaphors, contrasting threads, mythical, symbolic, technical, and artistic language leaves me, on the hole, more confused than enlightened. The following passage may illustrate the diverse concepts which we must try to cope with:

> As we know, anima is always restless when under too severe duress of the intellect, for it has another love. This other love is the love which a human person as a person has for God, from whom he has his existence, and for others as persons. It is not egocentric because a person always spells a relation, and in that personal relation the centrifugal love finds vent.
>
> The two kinds of love, therefore, which we distinguished as taking and giving, masculine and feminine, centripetal and centrifugal, which are contained in Eros and Agape and expressed in part by animus and anima, are now seen in the new distinction of nature and person, or better still in that of essence and existence.[1]

To complicate the problem, D'Arcy's "lion," which is to be reconciled with the "unicorn," relates to de Rougemont's book Passion and Society, but not to Nygren's book Agape and Eros. In other

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1. D'Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love, op. cit. p. 334

words, between D'Arcy, Rougemont, and Nygren we have three different interpretations of the word agape. De Rougemont sees agape as the rational, ordered love which can stem the impulsive, negative, passion of romantic love. Nygren views agape as the love which God bestows, unconnected with reason and human will. D'Arcy retranslates de Rougemont's agape to mean another kind of eros, and he reinterprets agape from Nygren to mean divine love which properly informs and corrects eros. D'Arcy seems not to realize how far his concept of agape is from Nygren's. The difference between their notions of grace, combined with the difference between their concepts of the appropriate response to God's love, makes nonsense of any assumption that agape has a specific definition for all time. For Nygren, the response to God's agape is faith in God and love toward the neighbour. For D'Arcy, the apparent motive for God's influence upon eros is the eventual mystical reunion with God, à la St. John of the Cross. D'Arcy hardly mentions love for the neighbour as a demand or function of agape. Rather, it appears that the impact of agape upon eros is hardly different from the Augustinian notion that God loves himself through his inspiration of our love for him. Rather than correcting Nygren, D'Arcy is subject to Nygren's own criticism. Despite the influence of agape on eros, or even the creation of eros by agape, D'Arcy does not escape from the charge of private piety. In talking about love he has used many different words and concepts, but the matter is only interpreted in a plethora of modern terms without substantial novelty. Neither the "lion" nor the "unicorn", nor the two conceived together, are likely to bring a greater justice to our world.

On the positive side, D'Arcy has asserted that love cannot be held theologically in opposition to itself. Perhaps if he had refused to accept the initial terminology of de Rougemont and Nygren, his attempt to "form a bond" between "the lion and the unicorn"

would seem more successful. He has stressed the undergirding, creative effect of God's love, which must have the capacity to inform and influence *eros* if alienation between Creator and creation is not to be perpetuated by inadequate human loves. But without an equal stress upon reconciling human beings with one another, his ideal of *philia* remains a fantasy.

Perhaps the conclusive impact of D'Arcy's book constitutes a reminder that there are many ways and words for talking about love. But any hasty combination of old philosophical models with new psychological theories may result in a tangle of meanings, perhaps impossible to unwind.

CHAPTER FOUR

HUMAN NATURE AND LOVE'S IDEAL

The Development of 'Love' in Neo-Orthodox Protestantism

CHAPTER FOUR

HUMAN NATURE AND LOVE'S IDEAL

Topical Survey

Human Nature and Love's Ideal

With the increasing interest in the idea of agape following the first world was, and a corresponding emphasis upon biblical scholarship, it seemed for a time that 'neo-orthodox' Protestant theologians might arrive at some agreement about the character of Christian love. The initial emphasis was reactionary, inspired in part by Karl Barth's call to arms against an overly optimistic, dangerously anthropocentric, and ethically reductive 'liberal theology', unleashed in his Epistle to the Romans.[1] Love, however, did not find its definitive interpretation in the neo-orthodox movement. Although Anders Nygren, Emil Brunner, and Karl Barth (for example) had many views in common, some of their greatest arguments have arisen around the interpretation of Christian love.

From a slightly different orientation, Reinhold Niebuhr contributed to the discussion, partially in agreement with the neo-orthodox ethos, and partially divergent. With a certain provisional licence the four above-mentioned theologians generally represent an important approach to the interpretation of Christian love which, despite marked diversity, has a common essential character. That character is broadly recognized as 'neo-orthodox' but the term does not give due credit to the range and novelty of the ideas involved. As a theological movement, 'neo-orthodoxy' is probably on the verge of eclipse, just as early 'liberal theology' was somewhat eclipsed by it.[2] But many of its ideas survive, to be blended and synthesized with the ideas of new generations. Its legacy asserts that agape is God's own love - far removed from the capricious and contingent loves of the natural human being - always giving, sacrificing, and

1. Karl Barth, Epistle to the Romans, (1919) ET Edwin Hoskins, London, 1933 cf. John McIntyre's short assessment of the idea of love in liberal theology, called into question by the neo-orthodox movement. On the Love of God, op. cit. pp. 23-27 "..history had proved to be too much for it"...but "the emphasis had been right."
2. Of course this is a subjective assessment. Despite the longevity of the ideas and issues, the movement itself had probably run its course long before Barth's death. cf. Alasdair Heron, A Century of Protestant Theology, Lutterworth Press, London, 1980, pp. 81-86.

creating. It asserts that God's love and the Christian's (qua 'Christians') is (or are) qualitatively different from the 'love' which is innate in humanity. Its agape-love is sacrificial, self-giving, and unmotivated by self-interest. It proceeds from a context of faith which radically reshapes behaviour (in theory if not in fact) so that love for one's neighbour may occur spontaneously. It supersedes all ethical casuistry in the form of legalism and obligation. It is sharply critical of any 'egocentric' piety, and sets worship primarily in the context of a serving community. It stresses the incapacitating and alienating character of human sin, the solution of which can only be God's grace, made freely available through Christian faith. Above all, the very idea of love is to be interpreted by no human act or emotion, but rather by the act of God, in and through the incarnation and atonement of his son Jesus Christ.

In this chapter I want to look more closely at this general concept of love as it is represented in the works of Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Karl Barth. Much of the discussion has already been presented in Chapter "3" when attention was paid to Anders Nygren. The other three theologians, while diverging from and occasionally sharply criticizing Nygren, nevertheless fall within the broad general spectrum, which, for want of a better term, shall continue to be inadequately represented as neo-orthodoxy. In the background of this discussion, without which it could not have taken place, are the thoughts of Augustine, Luther, and Kierkegaard. As Barth noted (in a different context), "We have not spun these statements out of the void."[1] But to paraphrase Kierkegaard, one mistake often leads to another.[2]

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV/2, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, E.T. G.W. Bromiley, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1958 (Zurich 1955) p. 825
2. cf. above, Chapter "2", p.94, note 1. Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 14

I. Emil Brunner: The Divine Imperative

The similarities between Nygren and Emil Brunner are striking. Although neither was dependent upon the other, Nygren's book Agape and Eros and Brunner's book The Divine Imperative are in such general agreement on the doctrine of love that some collaboration might have been supposed. Their common emphasis upon the role of faith, the nature of love as essentially God's, not that of humanity, and the infinite chasm between the character of God and human nature are hallmarks of neo-orthodoxy. The fact that these elements were so completely integrated into their works demonstrates the force of the movement against the anthropocentrism of 19th-century liberal theology. Brunner's concern, however, is with the ethical implications deriving from a context of faith.

1. The Imperative: "Believe!"

Like Nygren, Brunner criticizes ethical systems based upon a casuistry of values. Brunner labels those which attempt to define "the Good" as "synthetic ethics". In them, he concludes, "the ethically decisive element lies in the law of the scale of values, not in the values themselves."[1] Brunner does not think that ethical systems following Kant's model can be satisfactory for Christianity, because the source of ethical discernment is a "divine substance" and not reason. Kant lacks the conception of a "personality" who is self-revealing, who confronts the 'I' as a 'thou'. The command of Christ, "Thou shalt," implies for Brunner more than obedience; it entails the acknowledgement of such a confronting personality, greater than an aesthetic sense of "the Good" or the rational sense of ought. The ethics commanded in Christianity cannot be based upon reason, but must depend upon the self-revelation of God who is above reason. The question is occupied not with "What is the

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1. Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, E.T. Olive Wyon 1937 (Zürich, 1932) p. 42

Good?" Rather, "Who is the Good?" is the primary question of Christian morality. The "bad" can only be removed by the action of God, since human attempts to "be good" are doomed to failure. If humans cannot be "good" in this world (and according to Brunner even the attempt to do so is a sin), then "the answer of faith to the ethical problem is the word of sin and grace." [1]

> Faith, therefore, is the threshold of love, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that it is the act of stepping into the divine love. In faith, man, since he takes his life from the hands of God, does not desire anything more of his own, but only that which God wills. But the will of God is love. Love is the meaning of the revelation of Christ; therefore love is the content of the existence of the believer. Love is therefore 'greater' than faith because God is love, but is not faith. Faith is saying 'Yes' to the divine love.[2]

Humankind, according to Brunner, cannot realize the Good. The attempt to do so is "dominated by the principle of self-seeking and self-reverence." [3] Faith in Christ must precede love; the ethical life is actually based upon faith primarily; only by faith is love made possible. Yet Brunner seems hesitant to admit that love is at all a human possibility.

> Love in the sense in which the New Testament uses the word, is not a human possibility at all, but it is exclusively possible to God. Love is an "ultimate" eschatological possibility; for it will be the last thing when everything else, even faith, has vanished. Hence "living in love" is not something which man can achieve by his own efforts and in his own strength, but it is something which happens to man in faith, from God. The decisive element in this life in love is therefore always to allow ourselves to be loved by God."[4]

The above quotation illustrates a common inconsistency or paradox in Brunner's idea of love, which may be merely illogical. Repeatedly he tells us that humans are incapable of love, yet we are enabled by faith to love our neighbours. The person without faith cannot love his fellow-human being because he does not know God.[5] A mother's love is the nearest "natural" form to the love of the New Testament, but it is "only a fore-shadowing of absolute love."[6] Yet, "if we

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1. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 52
2. Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, E.T. Olive Wyon, Lutterworth Press, London, 1939 (Zurich 1937) pp. 487-488
3. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 69
4. ibid. p. 164 5. ibid. p. 304 6. ibid. p. 332

do not hate our brother, we love him, for we are always either loving or hating people."[1]

What Brunner seems to be saying is that faith authenticates an innate or natural urge toward love. But the different ways he tries to say this do not always seem consistent. His style is almost too straight-forward to express adequately what Kierkegaard might have more capably described as a paradox. In Brunner, the effect is often the appearance of logical contradiction. Somehow he wants to say that authentic love follows from faith, but again and again he is forced to return to descriptions of "natural" love in order to describe the transformation.

> "...loving him means to love mankind; to be united to him means to be united to man. His will is wholly a social will, a will for a people, for a community; therefore God recognizes no service of God which is not at the same time a service of man. Unlike the God of the mystics, or the pagan thinkers, God does not desire a service addressed to himself alone; he who wills to serve God must exercise love and mercy, must know himself one with the need of his people. This is the service which is well-pleasing to God, and this is the Good.[2]

If the above quotation represents the content of love which proceeds from faith, it is hard to see how faith's love is so radically different from authentic human love, understandable and possible to all.

But let us hear Brunner further. Brunner's central question is not about the content of love, but rather about the appropriate response of humanity to the grace of God, perceived through faith. We should love our fellows because God makes his rain to fall on good and bad alike. Our love must not be dependent upon whether the neighbour deserves our love. Since Christ has come <u>to</u> humankind, we are to go <u>to</u> the neighbour, not retreating to a search for God outside the world, or within ourselves. Rather, it is precisely <u>in</u> the world, <u>in</u> the neighbour that God is to be discovered. The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew announces that "there is no love

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1. Brunner, <u>The Divine Imperative</u>, op. cit. p. 320
2. ibid. p. 54

for God which can ignore man, and no love of man which can ignore God." [1] Only in the Incarnation, says, Brunner, is a distinction discernible, through faith, between eros and agape. "For one who has not died to self, 'in Christ', and through that divine surrender is not consecrated and 'sealed', eros and agape always merge into one another, love is still limited. Love which has no limits and makes no conditions is love "in Christ".[2] The love of God, that love which is both given to and demanded from Christians, is revealed at the Cross. It confronts the individual "existentially" and impells him to an "imitation" of that love in love for the neighbour. Such obedience, under the authority of grace, has the character of a free "inclination". It is not a "duty" in the sense of obligation. One does not perform the duty from the motive of one's own good, but rather from the inspiration, the "gift" of faith. The "divine imperative", to love God and the neighbour, is contingent upon the "penultimate" command to believe.[3] In fact, he asserts, the real command is just this "Believe!" Only through hearing this command is it possible to "obey" the command to love.

2. Both Gift and Demand?

Thus for Brunner, the "divine imperative" is "both gift and demand".[4] Because God himself loves humankind, the command to believe is issued as gift which entails its "possibility", and as a demand which requires a response in the form of service to the neighbour. In this way, says Brunner, the antithesis between eudaemonism and duty is overcome. Obedience to the command becomes a free inclination, removing the character of law. The requirement of service to the neighbour's good, instead of to the good of the self, removes the

1. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 55 (Brunner here seems to equate agape and eros with caritas and amor.)
2. ibid.
3. ibid. pp. 111-112; cf. p. 185 "Indeed, in the last resort nothing is commanded save this: "Believe!" "Faith is a gift, but it is also commanded."
4. ibid. p. 114, cf. p. 185. Thus for Brunner, the true "Divine Imperative" is not love, but rather faith.

character of eudaemonism. The Good becomes radically redefined as "what God wills", which through the response to the command, is now "what man wills".

Brunner's intriguing juxtaposition of "gift and demand" in interpretation of the commandment to love God and the neighbour requires some mental gymnastics which may not be totally within the realm of logic.

It may not be appropriate to say that the same love can be simultaneously "given" and "demanded". Karl Barth has said that Brunner cannot have it both ways. "Giving," he said, "is a very different thing from demanding."[1] A love which gives freely and unconditionally may be in jeopardy of denying its unconditionality if it demands something, even love, in return. But to be fair to Brunner, he has attempted to interpret the commandment of Jesus that God and the neighbour shall be loved without lapsing into a strict requirement of duty. Faith, he thinks, changes the "command" to a spontaneous action, so that its "obedience" is inspired rather than obliged. A somewhat similar interpretation was also attempted by Kierkegaard. "The commandment is that you shall love, but when you understand life and yourself, then it is as if you should not need to be commanded, because to love human beings is still the only thing worth living for..."[2] For Brunner, the only way in which the command has the character neither of eudaemonism nor of duty is through the prior command to believe. But an even more outstanding question may be involved here. It is as difficult to conceive of "obeying" a commandment to believe as it is to "obey" a command to love. For Kierkegaard, faith could not be conceived as a command. Faith was God's gift and it could not be willed. Love, on the other hand, had to be "believed", "willed", and "obeyed", for it could

1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2, op. cit. p. 781
2. Soren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 344

not be assumed to be spontaneous. For him the commandment to love was the obligation which kept faith alive; "Truly", he said, "a confession of faith is not enough."[1] Only after sustained growth in loving might the imperative of the commandment to love disappear, but self-love was never defeated so that love for the neighbour might be taken for granted.

Brunner and Nygren have been concerned (with Barth) to take away the flavour of duty from the commandment to love, partially in response to Kantian ethics. As a "command" it bears a close resemblance not only to some "categorical imperative", but also to the obligation of law. For neo-orthodox ethics, Christian love must avoid the Scylla of nomos (law and duty) and the Charybdis of eros (eudaemonism and self-love). Agape must emerge as the straight path from God to the neighbour, having the essential character of spontaneous, self-giving love. For Brunner and Nygren, faith is the key to spontaneous love (less so far Barth). As Brunner says, faith has the capacity to change life "from life in the imperative to life in the indicative."[2] For Brunner and for Nygren there is the idea that Luther proposed, that "man is a pipe" through which the love and will of God flow directly through the believer toward the neighbour.

But through all this avoidance of nomos and eros - ethics conceived as duty and ethics conceived as a search for "the Good"- a strain is laid on faith which may be more than it can bear. In addition, there is also a strain on reason. Even if our minds can cope with the idea of paradox there is a limit to logic which cannot be overcome by the repeated juxtaposition of conflicting terms. Love in the Christian sense of agape must continue to be described by connotations which are not overwhelmingly different from common, secular usage. The "natural" man quite understands the ideas of

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1. ibid.
2. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 77

sacrifice, spontaneity, and creativity, and such terms need not have the pretence of authentication solely by faith. If God's love is to be eminently "giving" it can hardly be conceived as simultaneously "demanding". An "imperative" is normally a command, and it is difficult to conceive as also a spontaneous "indicative". If we have difficulty thinking how love may be commanded, the problem is only exacerbated by any suggestion that faith is commanded, and must be "obeyed", before the command of love may be understood.

> Through faith man becomes a volunteer in the divine army, one who, because and insofar as he believes, can do nothing else than will what God wills, precisely because his life is based in and on God. Therefore because he no longer seeks himself, he now seeks that which God seeks, that is, the world, the other man. The will of God for the world now becomes the will of the believer. The ethical impulse is now no longer that of self-regard, but of love...In faith alone is self-love conquered by the love of God.[1]

However we view the function of faith, the relationship of humanity to God, or "the will of God for the world," the tragedy in history, particularly ecclesiastical history, is a witness against this connection between faith and love. Neither Kierkegaard nor Barth nor Niebuhr could agree with such a mechanistic assessment, although Nygren and Luther have similar views. To Brunner's credit, he does not continue consistently with this line of thought. But his inconsistency and tendency to easy reductions render inadequate his attempt to formulate an idea of ethics based upon faith and demonstrated through love.[2]

3. Love and Justice - Ideal and Practical

Brunner is unconvincing in his attempt to assert and maintain both a radical interpretation of agape and the "loveless...orders" upon which culture and government rest; nevertheless he attempts to affirm them simultaneously. If agape is as directly related

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1. ibid. p. 79
2. For a much more complete analysis of Brunner's ethical thought, cf. N.H.G. Robinson, The Groundwork of Christian Ethics, Collins, London, 1971. While sympathetic to Brunner at many points, Robinson notes that Brunner's ethics is "essentially negative", and grounded on a "naturalistic fallacy." (esp. pp. 233-5.)

to the will of God as he has suggested, then it is difficult to see why the injustice of the orders must be "accepted" by the Christian.[1] Brunner's attempt to set Christian love in practical relation to the world's orders should have required some change in his theory of radical dualism between the love of Christianity and the loves of natural human beings. Even less acceptable than some synthesis between agape, eros and nomos is his argument that Christian love must be "forgotten" in order to maintain the orders. If such a dualism between theory and practice is necessary, then there certainly must be something wrong with the theory. If agape is truly unlimited, then the Christians must not be forced to "accept" the limitations of orders which are fundamentally unjust.

In many respects Brunner's attempt to set Christian love in the context of practical life resembles Reinhold Niebuhr's distinction between sacrificial, "disinterested" love and that which is deemed possible in an "immoral society". (But in Niebuhr, as we shall see, the distinction between the ideal and the pragmatic is more consistently represented.)

For Brunner as for Nygren, faith is the tail that wags the dog. Faith is alleged to authenticate and create love, but when faith's love is applied to the practical decisions of ethical life, there seems to be no essential difference between the love of Christians and the loves of ordinary human beings caught up in the necessity and contingency of existence. Faith makes the will of the Christian conform with the will of God, but in pragmatic terms, the social will enshrined in the 'orders' and institutions of culture take priority over love. True love is reserved apparently for some corner of existence which is not opposed by practical decision-making.

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1. Brunner's confusing development of the "orders" which the Christian is called upon to both accept and resist is called into question by the events of his era (especially in Europe) and also by the continuation of oppressive "orders" in numerous forms. A significant viewpoint which may render Brunner's whole ethics incomprehensible is the following: "The Christian must as it were forget all he ever knew about the meaning of love, to preserve the orders...even to the point of taking human life." The orders are to be preserved "for their meaning is love." They are "incurably loveless," contrary to the law of love. "To improve them is not a hopeless task, nor is it unnecessary, but it is still only a matter of secondary importance." The Divine Imperative, op. cit. pp. 211-288.

"The distinctive mark of the Christian ethos" says Brunner, "is passive love, self-sacrificing surrender."[1] Faith means to allow oneself to be loved by God, passively. But how such love may be consistently converted to justice-creating action, Brunner has not shown. The idea of Christian love cannot be sustained by the necessity to perpetuate the institutions of Christendom, nor are they wholly incompatible. Brunner has stressed a dichotomy between love and justice which sets the former on a pedestal above and beyond the possibilities of the latter, so that love and justice are tacitly opposed.[2]

From a concept of human love which is always "particular" and is never "universal", Brunner has developed a concept of justice which is sterile and legalistic. Love is always directed toward the concrete individual, but justice, he says, is "like an impartial division of territory." Love can create community, but justice is only able to remove strife.[3] Justice absolutely respects the sphere of life of the other, but this clearly defined barrier leads to separation and isolation. Justice always has the quality of some restriction, but "the love of neighbour is not a general idealized love of humanity, but the unrestricted recognition of the other man, without considering what he is like."[4] Insofar as justice entails the idea of equality, Brunner says that "the egalitarian idea does not arise out of the reverence for the Creator, but out of a desire to dictate to the Creator how things ought to be."[5] To try to make everyone equal is "to kill economic vitality". Brunner is critical of capitalism, but nevertheless "accepts" it, since "it is this system by which God maintains our lives."[6] He says the Christian "need not be infected by the spirit of this economic system", even though "as a merchant or a banker or a workman I may

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1. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 328
2. Nygren explicitly states that love and justice are opposed. cf. Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 90
3. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 305
4. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 306
5. ibid. p. 407
6. ibid. p. 423

be forced to do things which are contrary to love."[1] The Christian is supposed to strive for a better order, but the Church is to "guard herself from political entanglements as from the devil."[2] A Christian political party, he says, would be worse than anarchy. "The ultimate identification of our own cause with the Lord's is forbidden."[3] But the identification of the Christian's will with the will of God seems to have been forgotten.[4]

Marriage, says Brunner, is no place for "democratic experiments". "Where there is genuine love, in the double sense of eros and agape.. a monarchy will arise of itself."[5] Clearly, the male is to be conceded the dominant role, a "truth" derived from the Christian faith. (In speaking of love in marriage, Brunner can talk of "genuine love in the double sense of eros and agape", an interpretation which clearly contradicts previous statments.) For Brunner, marriage must be based not upon love, but rather upon fidelity. "Natural love is in its essence monistic."[6] His notion of Christian love as an undetermined and unpreferential love seems to prevent a clear association with marriage; also Brunner seems forced to retain an idea of eros within the marriage relationship, which does not tally well with previous assertions that agape and eros are opposed. Brunner seems to be aware, despite secular implications, that the love which is necessary to marriage cannot be absorbed by a totally sacrificing and selfless agape which stems from faith.[7] On the other hand he does not seem to be aware of the call for justice within marriage, and within every human relationship, between the 'I' and the 'thou'. Certainly the conception of marriage as an instinctive "monarchy" derived from Christian faith is inter-twined with value systems which may have been more acceptable to Brunner's era than to our generation. We can no longer accept such values

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1. ibid. 2. ibid. p. 287 3. ibid. p. 432 4. ibid. p. 79
5. ibid. p. 380
6. ibid. p. 347 Brunner does not systematically oppose agape and eros to the same extent as Nygren, but he clearly assumes a division between them; only agape is normally "genuine".
7. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 332

uncritically.

In Brunner's idea of the state, he tends to set aside previous assertions about love so as to preserve the "orders" over against anarchy. His concept of justice is reduced to that which is convenient to preserve order. The idea of equality is inadmissible, he says, because perfect equality destroys all life.[1] Nevertheless justice has a "spirit of equity".[2] Such an equity can only be discovered "at the moment of action". We are forbidden to indulge in "utopian dreams", because we live in a wicked world, only to be redeemed by a divine act.[3] We must accept the evils of the state, yet try to love the individual in spite of them. We must not attempt to set up a state upon the principles of perfect justice, or perfect equality, for "perfect justice is a self-contradictory term because the perfect can never be merely just."[4] The form of the state cannot be construed beforehand, because political action is always dependent upon the "Divine Command" at this particular moment, in these particular circumstances. The state cannot and ought not be governed by the law of love, but only in accordance with its own principles, called "reasons of state".[5] "No state," he says, "has ever sprung from 'principles of justice."[6] Brunner calls pacifism "an anabaptist utopia".[7] He argues for the traditional concept of "the just war".[8] He says that penal law is intended to represent the divine judgment and retribution on earth, that the law fulfills the function of expiation.[9] (But he does argue against capital punishment.) Justice forcibly imposed is not good in itself, but it is "a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ".[10] He delineates the difference between love

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1. ibid. p. 182 2. ibid. 3. ibid. p. 401
4. ibid. p. 450 (This is either bad grammar, bad logic, or a bad interpretation of justice).
5. ibid. p. 462
6. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 463
7. ibid. p. 469
8. ibid. Brunner is not alone in reminding us of "just war" criteria. The question is too complex to consider here, but my own view is that it incorporates an idea of justice which cannot be reconciled with Christian love; war, even if "necessary," is always sinful and can never be "just". As Bonhoeffer said, "it is only when Christian faith is lost that man must...secure by force the victory of his cause." cf. Bonhoeffer, Ethics, Fontana 1964,p.93
9. ibid. p. 475
10. ibid. p. 453

and justice in such a way as to show that love is an ideal, normally possible only between single individuals, not to be sentimentally allied with the idea of the state.

> The distinction between justice and love is clear. Love means going out to others, justice means the delimitation of spheres of power, and the protection of these boundaries. Love is concrete and personal, non-deliberate, non-general. Justice on the other hand, is general, lawful, deliberate, impersonal and objective, abstract and rational. This lawful justice is the presupposition of love. Love which had not passed through this stage would be arbitrary and subjective and sentimental; yet love, while passing through this stage, must rise above it. But even in this subordinate position the idea of justice, precisely insofar as it is an element of law, is of incalculable significance for the historical life.[1]

If, as Brunner here asserts, "this lawful justice is the presupposition of love", then he seems to have made a radical departure from his previous declaration that faith is the presupposition of love. Earlier he said, "Love is not only the fulfilment of the law, but also its end, and thus the end of all ethics."[2] ("End" here is not a telos, but a terminus.) But Brunner's idea of justice, demonstrated above, is hardly more than the general idea of law, of nomos. It contains little of the assumption of equality between the self and the neighbour, by which we are commanded to love the neighbour as oneself. It contains little of the Hebrew concept of mispat, distributive justice, but endorses primarily the idea of a calculated "delimitation of spheres of power". Brunner does not acknowledge a justice which may be spontaneous nor one which is the direct effect of love: If you love me..."feed my sheep"..."Go and do likewise." It is law that often preserves the orders of society, but justice revealed through Christ and endorsed by Christianity should not be defined by secular legal constructs. Justice must be much more than law. Laws indeed may be just, but justice is not to be defined by law; nor is love to be opposed to justice.

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1. ibid. p. 450
2. ibid. p. 79

In light of the Atonement, retributive justice is no longer an admissible concept, and it certainly cannot be on earth "the representation of divine judgment." The Cross has brought an end to penal justice, and any attempt to perpetuate it has nothing to do with love nor justice in Christian terms, but is only a regression to legalism. If Brunner's idea of Christian love is so weak as to demand the perpetuation of the idea of the just war, if no utopia is ever to be dreamed of, if pacifism is a delusion, if equality between human beings is unthinkable, if no state may ever be founded upon principles of justice, then his love which proceeds from faith is either wrongly conceived, or wholly impotent. At the very least, it is inconsistent.

II. Reinhold Niebuhr: Sacrificial and Realistic Loves

Reinhold Niebuhr's influence upon contemporary theology, particularly that which comes from the United States, can hardly be overlooked or over-estimated. Any discussion today of love in the "context" of justice is likely to be more or less indebted to Niebuhr. Indeed, Frederick Herzog's call for an emphasis upon the establishment of "justice structures" (c.f. Introduction, above) has a certain affinity with the young pastor of Detroit, who in the twenties attempted to relate God's love to the very real dilemmas of a burgeoning industrial society. That same pastor, the Edinburgh Gifford lecturer at the beginnings of the second world war, was to speak of the difficulty of relating Christian "sacrificial love" to "structures of justice" in a flagrantly imperfect world. Many of Niebuhr's concepts and suggestions continue to reappear in many disciplines. Not only theology and Christian ethics, but also sociology, psychology, and political science have freely adapted from his work.[1] Here we can only touch on a few central concerns which have continued to exert substantial influence upon modern formulations of the idea of Christian love, and upon that which is "possible" in history.

1. Luther's Legacy

Despite considerable differences, comparisons are often made between Niebuhr, Brunner, and Barth.[2] Not so often recognized is the fundamental common ground between Niebuhr and Anders Nygren. Niebuhr will not accept Nygren's 'absolute' distinction between

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1. cf. Kegley and Bretall, ed., Reinhold Niebuhr, His Religious, Social and Political Thought, New York, 1956.
2. cf. Gene Outka, Agape, An Ethical Analysis, op. cit. This chapter overlaps Outka's discussion in certain respects, and his work is certainly more extensive in comparison of Nygren, Niebuhr, Brunner, and Barth on the subject of love. I believe, however, that Outka has rushed to a 'technical' interpretation of agape which is unjustified, and certainly unbiblical. It is doubtful that agape can be conceived essentially as "a substantive ethical principle." (p. 257).

the spheres of the divine and the human.[1] But both Nygren and Niebuhr share, as do Brunner and Barth, the limited but significant influence of Martin Luther.

For Nygren, a Lutheran bishop, Luther's influence is explicit and direct. For Niebuhr, it is subtle, indirect, and harder to identify. Niebuhr's frequent use of the idea of "paradox" allows him to say Lutheran things without the package of Lutheran doctrine. Nevertheless, the emphasis upon sin, the condemnation of pride, the radical nature of "sacrificial love", and the constant demand for freedom may all be traced to Luther. In addition, we note that Niebuhr insists that a Christian must be "a citizen of two worlds", whereas Luther could speak of two "kingdoms." Niebuhr denies Luther's doctrine of depravity, but nevertheless seems to maintain it as we learn that in this world, the human being is not able to achieve 'perfection' and must rely upon the "transcendent" vindication of love "at the end of history." Even though true love and justice are "possible" they are "impossible" due to the conflict of freedoms. Thus the "judge, jailer, and executioner" must be retained. Finally, Niebuhr's emphasis upon faith is somewhat ambiguous, but in light of Luther, we may not be surprised to notice that true, sacrificial, disinterested love is "a derivative of faith".[2]

Despite the sophisticated way in which Niebuhr develops his doctrine of humanity, we find in it many of the same elements which Luther had identified in the sixteenth century:

> A Christian man is a perfectly free lord of all subject to none. A Christian man is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

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1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, Vol.I. 1941; Vol. II, 1943; Lyceum Paperback, 1964; p. 84 - For simplicity and for the most concise exposition of Niebuhr's view of Christian love, with which this section is concerned, most of the following references from Niebuhr depend upon this two-volume work. However, it should be noted that Niebuhr's view of love and justice in other works cannot be always reconciled with his view in The Nature and Destiny of Man.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 271

> Now love by its very nature is ready to serve and to be subject to him who is loved.
>
> Man has a twofold nature, a spiritual and a bodily. According to the spiritual nature, which men call the soul, he is called a spiritual, or inner, or new man; according to the bodily nature, which men call the flesh, he is called a carnal or outward or old man, of whom the Apostle writes..."though our outward man is corrupted yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Because of this diversity of nature the scriptures assert contradictory things of the same man, since these two men in the same man contradict each other...[1]

In the first extract there is the paradox of freedom, which Niebuhr stresses constantly. In the second is the idea of "sacrificial love." And in the third is the contradiction in human nature which demands, a 'realistic' approach to love and justice. Both Nygren and Niebuhr try to reinterpret Luther's doctrine of the Fall as a more comprehensive model for innate egocentrism in human nature. In its most primitive form, this egocentrism is for Nygren "vulgar eros" and for Niebuhr the sinful state of "sensuality". These represent the tendency of human nature to regress toward subhuman forms of existence. This base tendency, however, is for Niebuhr derived from, and possibly subordinate to, the serious form of sin which is resident in the human will. For Nygren, this is eros, acquisitive love which ultimately strives toward a union with the divine. But for Niebuhr, this grasping sin of the will is nothing else than human pride, hubris, or superbia.[2]

Niebuhr himself tells us that Luther used pride (superbia) and self-love (amor sui) synonymously.[3] In the extreme, pride is the attempt at human self-deification. "Man falls into pride when he seeks to raise his contingent existence to unconditioned significance."[4]

Thus from Luther is developed the emphasis upon the sin of egocentrism, categorized under the headings of eros by Nygren, and

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1. Martin Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty, op. cit.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 277
3. ibid. p. 187
4. ibid. p. 186

pride, by Niebuhr. One might almost call this sin idolatry, since at the extreme, it wills equality with God, or in Niebuhr's terms, the "unconditioned significance" of the self. Luther's amor sui is, with little essential difference, both Nygren's eros and Niebuhr's pride.[1]

Luther does not condone any concept of self-love. Niebuhr, however, makes the distinction between "inordinate" and "ordinate" self-love, but he does not manage to give much attention to the latter. Nygren, of course, follows Luther; agape is the very opposite of self-love. According to Nygren, self-love is "not merely one sin among others, but the sin of sins." Self-love he tells us, is "the deepest root of all evil, its primal source."[2] "So far from self-love being a natural ordinance of God in nature, it is a devilish perversion. That which in all things seeks its own, is thereby closed against God." Niebuhr seems to acknowledge that it might be "possible" to love oneself properly, but in human nature, inordinate self-love, pride, is the "basis" of sin. The antipode of this pride or eros is sacrificial love, or agape. Despite Niebuhr's extensive qualifications and contingent interpretations, he essentially retains the same dualism within human nature which is intrinsic to Luther and explicitly developed by Nygren.[4] Here it might be appropriate to quote Luther's famous pronouncement on the command to love the neighbour "as thyself":

> I believe that by this precept 'as thyself' man is not bidden to love himself, but the vicious love is exposed wherewith he loves himself in fact; that is to say, thou art wholly bent upon thyself and turned to love of thyself (curvus es totus in te et versus in tui amorem) from which thou shalt not be made straight except thou entirely cease to love thyself and forgetful of thyself, love thy neighbour alone.[5]

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1. But these are not equivalent with St. Augustine's amor sui. As we have seen, Augustine's idea of self-love was adopted by Luther only in its negative sense. Kierkegaard's idea of self-love has the ambiguous sense which is closest to Augustine, i.e. proper or improper, depending upon one's relationship to God. cf. Oliver O'Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, op. cit.
2. Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 537 3. ibid. p. 740
4. Brunner also retains this dualism, but he tells us (rather illogically) that self-love is actually commanded. The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p.171 Nevertheless, Brunner says, "The self is the evil." (p.174) We must "desire to be nothing." (p.164) It is impossible for the self to exist "apart from fellowship with God" (ie. through faith.) (p. 302)
5. Luther, Römerbrief, quoted by Nygren, Agape and Eros, op. cit. p. 712

It seems to me that far too much weight has been put upon this tenuous exegesis, not only by Nygren, but also by the whole genre of neo-orthodox theology. Neither Niebuhr, Brunner, nor Barth have admitted agreement with Luther's insistence that all self-love is "vicious". Nevertheless, the whole emphasis upon sin which has led to a pessimistic and dualistic view of human nature and an "impossible" conception of genuine love confronted by history, is the extrapolation of Luther's exegesis which concludes that all innate self-love is a vitiosus amor.

Although every theologian may need to admit the extent to which humanity is profoundly "incurvatus in se", the constant impact of sin and injustice, and the correlative call for an active repentance, there is also a need to assert consistently that creation is good, and that God's love is effective within history. The problem of the Fall, of the effect of human freedom, and of the perennial 'falling away' from the divine purpose must not be ultimately, in this world, contradictive of God's love in and through Creation. Even the requirement of faith must not be allowed to become so decisive in human existence that it retroactively, as it were, negates the original goodness in Creation. In their own ways, Brunner, Niebuhr, and Barth have identified these contradictions, and attempted to qualify their works in such a way that human nature is not ultimately (or in Niebuhr's case, eschatologically) opposed to the love of God in Creation. But despite attempts at a reconciliation, as long as faith is the generative force from which love is derived, as long as human nature is set in contradiction to itself, as long as the propensity to sin is the primary innate character in humanity, then the intrinsic dualism of Luther is the formative feature of theology. "Simul justus et peccator" is certainly a characterization of human nature in which there is truth. If we reserve this characterization only for the person with faith, so that without it humanity has only the character of peccator, we may find ourselves in agreement

with Luther, and possibly with Luther's interpretation of Paul. But it is also a denial of the creative, covenanted relationship of God with his creatures, and it has little to do with the Jesus of the synoptic Gospels.

The questions which Luther left us cannot easily be answered. Sin and self-love[1] are not theological propositions but tragic historical phenomena. But these cannot be put right by the simple "imperative" to believe; nor can they be resolved in some dissection of human nature which alienates the human being 'before' faith from the human being 'after' faith. Again, history alone is sufficient to tell us that there may be no qualitative, obvious difference; sin is made even more flagrant when it is committed by the faithful. Also, genuine love cannot be envisioned as a function or "derivative" of faith, necessarily and dramatically changing the imperfect to the perfect, or setting "pure agape" in place of "egocentric eros". If it were able to perform this magic, history would be more aware of it; but even if it were, God's love in the act of creation would have been an imperfect love indeed, and the Fall must have been a plunge into an abyss beyond the reach of a God either too weak to prevent it, or too unconcerned to care. Finally, if God's action in the Cross is merely a rescue operation which throws out a life-raft to anyone still afloat and able to swim to it, then again one must ask whether human freedom should ever have had the capacity to corrupt God's "good" creation to the extent that the rescue operation was necessary at all.

Luther's "questions" have not been ignored by the neo-orthodox theologians, but neither have they consistently been answered. Insofar as there appears to be a contradiction in the answers, to a great extent the contradiction may be traced to Luther's insistence

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1. i.e. superbia or hubris; not the 'proper' self-love to which Feuerbach, and in a different sense, Kierkegaard, refer.

that natural self-love is "vicious", and that faith's love is definitively "servile" or "sacrificial". If this distinction is asserted, then it is difficult to escape a contradiction between human nature and God's "good" creation. Or, if freedom is the culprit over which God has no control, then there is a contradiction between the love of God and an hypostatized 'freedom' which 'negates' God's sovereignty. Neo-orthodox theologians have attempted to reconcile God and humanity, while trying to maintain that God's love is "qualitatively" different from innate human loves. To what extent they have been able to "go beyond" Luther depends upon the following problems.

(1) How is the fact of human sin to be reconciled with the "goodness" of God's creation and his continued love for his creatures?

(2) What is the formative role of faith in relation to love?

(3) What is the effect or potential effect of Christian love in creating justice in this world? And how, if at all, is 'Christian justice' different from institutional legalism?

(4) How is the integrity of human nature, 'created in the image of God', to be explained and preserved?

Such unsolved, remaining questions are Luther's legacy to contemporary theology, the answers to which have a significant bearing upon the future of the idea of love. Luther has taught us not to seek our salvation in our own futile attempts to be righteous; to conceive of love in terms of our neighbours' needs and not in view of our own interest; and that true freedom is to be found in service to our fellows. But he has also spoken of faith in a way that may set it at odds with the very service which he has stressed, and with the very grace of which he was so aware. If we are not cautious in our talk about faith, love's capacity to create justice may be forsaken; and, as Feuerbach recognized, there may indeed arise "a contradiction between faith and love."

2. The Justitia Originalis of Reinhold Niebuhr

Niebuhr accepts and maintains the dualism between eros and agape. On the one hand he even heightens the distinction between them, for true agape is deemed so "disinterested", "sacrificial", and willing to suffer, that it is neither wholly possible nor even advisable in the ambivalent world we live in. But on the other hand, Niebuhr asserts that humanity in its fallenness is never cut off from a vision of true love. Even in the midst of self-love the fact that mankind may acknowledge and respond to another kind of selfless love indicates that the Fall is never beyond the range of God's grace. Humanity retains a portion of its symbolic perfection, able to recognize that "possible" love for which it was created. This vision, Niebuhr calls the justitia originalis. The "theological virtues" of faith, hope, and love, the requirements for true freedom, are constituents of a prior "righteousness" which "remain with sinful man as the knowledge of what he ought to be, as the law of his freedom."[1] In this way Niebuhr attempts to show that although eros and agape are antithetical to each other, eros may be influenced by agape even while eros is most active. There is never a complete separation between God and humanity. Niebuhr criticizes Nygren for making the chasm between God and humanity too absolute; he also says that one may indeed speak of "Christian" virtues-faith, hope, and love-which are worthy to be strived after, and which may be recognized even in a state of sin. "The ultimate law of life is the law of love", and such a "law" is so essential to true humanity that one may never be totally cut off from it. The person who cannot acknowledge love has lost his hold on life; there must be some 'point of contact' between God and humanity even in the depths of sinfulness. "The law of love is a vision of health which even a sick man may

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 280

envisage, as the original righteousness which man does not possess but which he knows he ought to possess, since the contradiction in which he stands, and the consequent compulsion and submission in his relations to God, the neighbour and himself, are obviously not an ideal state of health."[1]

Upon this justitia originalis, Niebuhr thinks the commandment to love God, and the neighbour as the self, is predicated. It is a commandment, a law, which should exclude all commandment, because what is commanded is "harmony", between the soul and God, and between the self and the neighbour. But the harmony is not a reality, for if it were a reality, the commandment would be meaningless. "If there were not some possibility of sensing the ultimate perfection in a state of sin, the "thou shalt" would be irrelevant."[2] Niebuhr continues with the confrontation between Jesus and the rich young man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor." (Mt. 19:16 ff.) "All simple moralism," says Niebuhr, "which assumes that the law of life only needs to be stated to be obeyed, is refuted by the response of the rich young man...Jesus admits that the ultimate possibility of human life is beyond the capacity of sinful man: 'With man this is impossible.'"[3] "It is suggested that the contradiction between man's essential nature and his sinful condition is insoluble from the standpoint of man's own resources and can be solved only from the standpoint of God's resources."[4]

Niebuhr's exegesis is suspicious; nevertheless much of his theology is based upon this interpretation of harmony, assumed in the commandment to love as an original "law" which may be sensed by the sinful human being. From it he develops his view of human nature: (1) The sinful human is able to recognize "the ultimate

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 287
2. ibid. p. 286
3. ibid.
4. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. I. p. 288

requirements of his nature", and that "any particular concretion of law is not enough." (2) Yet he is not (without faith) "fully conscious of these ultimate requirements." (3) "He is not ready to meet these requirements once they are defined."[1] Further, Niebuhr summarizes the content of this "original righteousness", "the law of love", as it contains:

(1) The perfect relation of the soul to God in which obedience is transcended by love, trust, and confidence." (2) "Perfect internal harmony of the soul with itself in all its desires and impulses"; (3) "the perfect harmony of life with life: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself!'"[2]

The problem with Niebuhr's exegesis is his assertion that "harmony" is commanded. Not only harmony but "perfect harmony" seems to be his rendering of what is required by "the law of love". This harmony is a subtle requirement for true love, which leads Niebuhr into an admission that the "sinful condition is insoluble from the standpoint of man's own resources." The inference is not only that the human being cannot save himself, but also that he cannot come even close to "performing" the law of love. He must be convinced, not by an attempt to obey that law, but rather by his acknowledgement (like the rich young man) that he is not able to obey it, that he is caught up in sin and cannot love. Not only is self-salvation impossible, but love is impossible, because harmony is impossible. The harmony is to be achieved only as God removes the anxiety about oneself, through faith. "Faith in the wisdom of God is thus a prerequisite of love because it is the condition without which man is anxious and is driven by his anxiety into vicious circles of self-sufficiency and pride."[3]

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1. ibid.
2. ibid. p. 289
3. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 289

To unravel Niebuhr's rather complex interpretation of the law of love is difficult, and adequately to criticize it is more so.

(1) Niebuhr is probably correct to assert that the sinful person may recognize love, even though it is impossible for him perfectly to actualize. He recognizes it not because of some "prior" state of perfection, but because he loves, and is loved by, other human beings.

(2) The insertion of "harmony" as part of the divine command only makes sense if we accept Niebuhr's notion that human beings cannot love unless all anxiety is removed. In this case, a love which demands harmony, not only for its perfection, but also for its initiation, would be rather fanciful even in light of Jesus' advice not to be anxious about oneself. God's nurture does not, in any case, guarantee a lack of anxiety. Faith in God may reduce it, but its absence need not be a prerequisite for love.

(3) Niebuhr implies that because the rich young man was not ready to give his money to the poor, obedience to the love command is impossible, "since all men are involved in the sin of establishing their own security by what they have and what they are." "The ultimate possibility of human life is beyond the capacity of sinful man."[1] If the implication here were only about salvation, we might not object. But from the previous context, it is clear that Niebuhr assumes "the ultimate possibility of human life" to be a "harmony" of love. Jesus' advice to the rich young man, "go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me" had conceivably been heeded by many of his disciples (cf. Luke 12:32-34; Luke 18:28; MK. 10:28); it was not impossible, and it did not serve simply as a device to convict the young man of his sin. We may assume that it was a straightforward invitation by Jesus, which was refused.

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1. ibid. p. 288

The story of the rich young man is in no way an anecdote illustrating the impossibility of perfect love; it is indeed an illustration of Jesus' call for justice from his disciples. Niebuhr is not willing to entertain the call for economic justice in this incident, but rather focusses upon the impossibility of obedience which is produced by anxiety, and upon God's capacity to make "ultimately" possible what is impossible for humanity.

(4) Niebuhr's emphasis upon the "harmony" required by the justitia originalis, "the perfect relation of the soul to God", "the perfect internal harmony of the soul with itself", and "the perfect harmony of life with life", is devised to convince us of three things. First, there is a natural sense in humanity which recognizes love and realizes it is impossible. Second, that faith is the prerequisite of love, because it removes anxiety about performing the impossible. And third, the "law of love" is so absolutely demanding that even faith does not make love possible in this world of opposed freedoms. Despite the sophistication of this argument, the impact is to make Jesus' preaching for repentance only an instrument for convicting human beings of sin. The law of love, like the Torah, is merely a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, impossible to perform and a reminder of our wickedness.[1] Anxiety is removed, not as we attempt to love, but only as we believe that God's grace is able to perfect our weaknesses in loving. We are freed to love imperfectly, and we must accept our imperfection, because wherever two or three are gathered, there will be disharmony.

It is not self-evident that love, even when "commanded" by Jesus, can properly be conceived as a "law". The performance of the command does not depend either upon a "prior righteousness" of which humanity is vaguely aware, nor upon the establishment of

1. I will admit that I do not here take account of numerous qualifications by Niebuhr which might make this assessment seem extreme. But on the other hand, the extent to which Niebuhr approximates the extremes of Luther's emphasis on faith, and the anti-nomian heresy, should not be ignored. That is, if it is impossible to be "good", then there may be a tacit conciliation of evil.

"perfect harmony" before such love is possible. There is little evidence of a biblical link between the advice not to be anxious and Jesus' issue of the command to love God and the neighbour as oneself. There is no convincing evidence in Jesus' synoptic ministry that faith is the prerequisite of love, nor that the commanded love is impossible.

3. Love in History

Niebuhr's proposition of a justitia originalis which intimates an ideal of harmony in which love is perfectable prepares the ground for his analysis of love which can never be perfect, in a history which is never harmonious. We have already noted that Niebuhr sees pride as the "basic or primal sin" from which others are evolved.[1] Although there is indeed a dualism between pride/self-love/eros and sacrificial love/harmonious love/agape, there is a 'point of contact' (Brunner's Anknüpfungspunkt) between them. This means that, contrary to Nygren, for Niebuhr the two loves may be "present" at the same time and in the same person. It may be possible to love oneself in a state of pride and selfishness while at the same time loving another person somewhat unselfishly. This situation in which a vision of sacrificial love informs or influences sinful self-love, and co-exists with it, is called "mutual love". Realistically, for Niebuhr, mutual love is about the best that human beings can hope to achieve in this world of opposed freedoms, of historical necessity and contingency. "From the standpoint of history mutual love is the highest good. Only in mutual love, in which the concern of one person for the interests of another prompts and elicits a reciprocal affection, are the social demands of historical existence satisfied. The highest good of history must conform to standards

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 186; Yet also, the "primal" sin is "unbelief." (p. 183, 289).

of coherence and consistency in the whole realm of historical vitality."[1]

Niebuhr's concept of mutual love is intimately related to his concept of the freedom of man, which he sees as the essence of humanity.[2] It is this innate freedom which constitutes the boon and the bane of human existence.[3] Through the use of freedom, the human has a capacity for "self-transcendence", which means that he is never the sum of his parts, that his true nature is always a bit of an enigma to phenomenological analysis, and never totally predictable, "finally always subject and not object."[4] Sin is essentially the wrong use of this freedom, but the "right" use of it is always inhibited by finite, historical existence in juxtaposition to other free creatures. This ambiguous freedom is derived from a symbolic or metaphorical Fall which, we may assume, Niebuhr thinks necessary for epistemology. "The knowledge of good and evil" is acquired by the use of freedom, but inevitable with it is the propensity to sin and the loss of "innocency", "Innocency is thus the harmony of life with life without freedom. Mutual love is the harmony of life with life within the terms of freedom; and sacrificial love is harmony of the soul with God beyond the limitations of sinful and finite history."[5]

With these distinctions Niebuhr enters the 'grey area' between theological theory and practical existence, an area which Nygren largely avoids, and which Brunner is not able to reconcile (c.f. above, section I).[6] Mutual love is Niebuhr's compromise between what is required by the love of God and what is possible in a real world. Ironically, mutual love itself cannct be a justifiable motive for its own existence. It must contain the motive of sacrificial

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1. ibid, Vol. II. pp. 68-69
2. ibid, Vol. I, p. 17; "The essence of man is his freedom."
3. cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, London, 1936, in which man's glory and his tragedy are portrayed as the result of human freedom and "self-transcendence."
4. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 14
5. ibid. Vol. II, p. 78
6. Brunner is not able to reconcile his concept of love with practical life, because to preserve the "orders" Christian love must be "forgotten." Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. p. 225

love in the loving agent(s); otherwise it will be mutual expediency instead of mutual love. For Niebuhr a "motive" is admissible because faith, hope, and love are conceived as Christian "virtues." But the goal of sacrificial love is never achievable, because it is inhibited and limited by the "claims and counterclaims" of the parties involved. The best that can be hoped is that a mutual love may arise, in spite of conflicting interests, which results in a harmony of life with life. The sacrificial love demonstrated in the Cross is for Niebuhr a real demand upon human beings; even though it is impossible to achieve in this world, it is not to be deprived of its influence and "pull" on the world. For to a smaller or greater extent, it is "transcendently present" wherever human beings try, but fail, to love sacrificially. Agape, to this limited extent, may coexist with eros, and even be "present" in it.

For Niebuhr, therefore, eros stands in a "paradoxical relationship" to agape. "Sacrificial love (agape) completes the incompleteness of mutual love (eros), for the latter is always arrested by reason of the fact that it seeks to relate life to life from the standpoint of self and for the sake of the self's own happiness."[1] Insofar as eros is characterized by Niebuhr as grasping, egocentric, self-loving, and full of pride, it is a sin which constitutes the ingredients of the Fall. But insofar as eros is a gregarious, life-supporting, knowledge-seeking movement towards community, eros represents for Niebuhr the stuff of human history. It is tainted with sin to be sure, but its very thrust of life towards life gives it a hopeful character. Although, as Gene Outka has observed, Niebuhr is far from consistent in his attempt to distinguish eros, mutual love, and agape, we can identify a dual sense in which Niebuhr uses eros.[2] The first sense is most like Nygren: eros is pride and self-love. But the second sense is not admitted by Nygren, as eros

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 82
2. cf. Gene Outka, Agape, op. cit. p. 25

acquires an ambivalent value within the context of mutual love. As the recognition of and partial response to agape begins to occur, eros may be re-formed to take the shape of mutual love, in which a reciprocal response is made possible, not wholly for the motive of self-interest. It is still predominantly eros, not yet "sacrificial" or "disinterested" in character, but agape has begun to influence eros within the sphere of historically limited existence. This second interpretation of eros in history provides the foundation of many forms of "contextual ethics," (and for that reason Niebuhr has been called "the father of contextual ethics.").[1]

Despite the potentially positive aspects of eros in the form of mutual love, the gregarious nature of eros is not enough to build a true community. Niebuhr agrees with Brunner, Nygren, and Barth that community faith is the only context in which sacrificial love is remotely "possible". But for Niebuhr, this possibility is only "transcendently" possible, since even in the Church there are conflicting interests. For the Christian, the Cross is the impinging symbol of sacrificial love upon historical existence. Even though such a love is realistically impossible, it is not irrelevant. The disharmony which makes sacrificial love impossible should convict the faithful person of his and his community's sin, and promote humility and a more selfless, disinterested love for the neighbour. Insofar as the Christian takes the commandment to love sacrificially in denial of himself, this transcendently present love may be seen to be impinging on history. But insofar as the Christian is prevented from exercising this love by his own self-transcendence, self-interest, and the conflicting claims of others, Christian love can only exert a subtle "pull" which can only be 'successful' at the end of history. For the present, that love which is shown in the

1. Niebuhrian ethics based upon some "context" which must be analyzed and responded to realistically have influenced Paul Ramsey, Joseph Fletcher, Seward Hiltner, and others who, while criticizing Niebuhr, adopt his method to a great degree.

Cross has the character of a "suffering love ",frustrated by historical contingency and freedom, to be vindicated eschatologically by God's decisive action.

> The agape, the sacrificial love, which is for Christian faith revealed upon the Cross, has its primary justification in an "essential reality" which transcends the realities of history, namely, the character of God. It does not expect an immediate or historical validation but looks towards some ultimate consummation of life and history. On the other hand the Christian doctrine of Creation does not set the eternal and divine into absolute contradiction to the temporal and historical. There are, therefore, validations of agape in actual history, in so far as concern for the other elicits a reciprocal response.[1]

The above quotation may be taken as a "summary" of Niebuhr's idea of sacrificial love, or agape. We have seen that eros is construed both as pride and a gregarious instinct which leads to mutual love. Now we note that sacrificial love or agape is active both within and outside history. It is symbolized in the Cross, and it is already sensed by the sinful human being through the justitia originalis. In the Sermon on the Mount and in the Commandment to Love it is nevertheless rendered 'impossible '. Its validation may be looked for only in eschatological terms. Nevertheless it is present here and now wherever self-interest is partially transformed into a concern for the other, so that it elicits a response. Since true sacrificial love requires "perfect harmony" it may not be taken as an ethic in itself, but it must be set practically within the context of historical existence. It is an ideal love, which "presupposes the resolution of the conflict of life with life ", and such harmony will not exist wherever more than two individuals assert opposing claims. This love does not seek its own, but "a love which seeketh not its own is not able to maintain itself in historical society."[2] It is "disinterested and as such can ameliorate the self-interested claims of persons who must exist, but it cannot

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1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 96
2. ibid. p. 72

find its perfection in this world. The prototype for this disinterested, suffering love is the self-denial of Christ, and the radical nature of the example indicates for Niebuhr that true sacrificial love is not only non-violent, but also non-resistant to evil.[1] Since all interests must be harmoniously related, however, "the sacrifice of the self for others is therefore a violation of natural standards of morals."[2] Christ's example is construed in such a way that the human response to it must be primarily the response of faith in God's majesty, and in his capacity to bring evil to a close beyond the frustrations of history. Nevertheless, this "suffering love" is transcendently present, with a capacity to influence eros in history, insofar as through 'natural' human love, a reciprocal response may be elicited. For where there is mutuality there is at least some semblance of the required "harmony of life with life".

For a critique of Niebuhr's pragmatic assessment of love in history, again we must begin with his notion of "harmony". In asserting that the love command also commands "perfect harmony," he has prepared the ground for a conception of mutual love as "the highest good of history." Sacrificial love's requisite harmony cannot be achieved, so we must have faith, and accept the harmony of mutual love as a pragmatic second-best. The problem, biblically, is Jesus' apparently straight-forward question: "Love your enemies...For if you love those who love you, what reward have you...And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Matt. 5:44-47). Niebuhr's rationale may be located in the next, summarizing 'command': "You therefore must be perfect (v. 48)." Of course this "perfect" may not be a command at all, but rather a statement of completion: 'If you love

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1. cf. Gene Outka, Agape, op. cit. p. 171: Outka notes that "to safeguard this (ideal) content, (Niebuhr) is willing to restrict justifying appeals to Jesus' teaching about the character of God."
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 69

your enemies, then you will be doing what is perfect in God's sight.'[1] At any rate, the whole section is specifically against the notion that mutual love is to be taken as any sort of standard for Jesus' disciples. Niebuhr's concept of mutual love, in which two parties find reciprocal benefit in loving each other, may be a practical, realizable goal. But nevertheless it seems to be challenged by Jesus' call for a love which does not require mutuality.

Secondly, Niebuhr has so 'perfected' the idea of sacrificial love that given his definition of it we cannot view it as achievable by humans in history. Outka has expertly criticized Niebuhr's view, and it is difficult to improve upon. Outka notes that Niebuhr offers a "blank check" to the neighbour to misuse our love: "Do unto others as they would have you do unto them." The result of this "blank check" may lead to consequences, says Outka, that are absurd and morally wrong (rape, for example). "The feature of self-sacrifice in itself would appear to provide no way of distinguishing between attention to another's needs and submission to his exploitation and no warrant for resisting the latter."[2] The antidote to this problem is the guideline, "as yourself," which is an indicator not only in the "Golden Rule" but also in the commandment to love the neighbour. Our own authentic needs, and not the extreme demands of the other, tells us how to love, initially. Outka, however, has not reconciled the call to "go the second mile". Nevertheless, for two major reasons Niebuhr's principle of sacrificial love must be ruled extreme.

The first is that it renders our "thesis" an impossibility: "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love." (John 15:10). If the love which is given and commanded is so impossible in history, then we cannot "abide" in Christ's love. The seriousness

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1. There are numerous possible readings of this verse which cannot be discussed here. Another significant interpretation is that Jesus' disciples will be perfected, i.e. as they keep his commands.(cf. Lev. 19. "perfect" may translate "holy")
2. Gene Outka, Agape, op. cit. p. 275

of the commands of Christ requires that they not be written off in history. Second-best is never adequate, and only through the attempt to complete the requirement of love do we truly have a right to claim grace as our justification (cf. eg., Mt 6:12; 15:15). Again and again Jesus requires his disciples to see that love is "possible." To assert that Christ's precept of love is too good for history is a retreat to the legalism of the law, and it is also the forfeiture of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Precisely in and with history God has appeared, not only to convict human beings of their sin, but even more to show them how to love. The command is simple, explicit, and stringent: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12). It must be possible.

The second reason is that Niebuhr's view of sacrificial love and its contingent alternative (i.e. mutual love) make justice a pragmatic, legalistic concept which conforms only to what is necessary, but not to what is just. Mutual love as "history's highest good" may be little more than mutual self-interest.[1] Love may indeed "call forth love " but love's reciprocation can only be a potential and not a requisite of love for the neighbour, indeed, for the enemy. A love which demands reciprocation, or even deems gratitude necessary for its approbation, is a paternalistic and counterfeit love. If after exploiting our neighbours we decide to love them, and then require that they love us in return, we must not be required to judge the validity of our love by their resentment or their reciprocal love. If mutual love is history's norm, then unreciprocated love is historical failure. On the other hand, if we require that those whom we have mistreated are to love us sacrificially, without

1. cf. Niebuhr, Love and Justice, ed. D.B. Robertson, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1957, pp. 25-26. Niebuhr acknowledges "The power and persistence of self-interest," in light of which "most of the harmonies of life are not the perfect harmonies of fully co-ordinated wills but the tolerable harmonies of balanced interests and mutually recognized claims." Despite the obvious benefit in such a recognition, it is not derived from the unconditional love which Christ commands.

resisting our exploitation, then such a self-denying love is also self-negating.[1] Jesus' identity with the poor and the oppressed, his cleansing of the temple, and his hard words about the Pharisees provide a mandate for a struggle with the oppressed against oppressors, not a refusal to resist evil. At the least, oppressors have no right to preach non-resistance to the oppressed. Niebuhr's "sacrificial love" is so passive that it does not allow for an active, if non-violent, resistance against oppression, much as Jesus' own interpretation of his ministry (Luke 4:18).[2] Jesus' love was not so sacrificial and "disinterested" to keep him from taking up the cause of impoverished widows, confronting the corrupt leaders of his religion, even 'violently' wielding a whip in the temple - only finally, finally handing on the baton to a greater liberating energy in the greatest demonstration against evil the world has yet known. The Cross is not the passive leading of sheep to the slaughter, but the active climax of a life dedicated to resistance on all fronts against evil.[3] Its primary adjective is not "sacrificial " but rather "victorious ", It is the evidence that love is not impotent, nor passive, nor self-negating, nor idealistic, but effective, consistent, and liberating in the struggle against every evil and oppression of history. To the greatest degree, Jesus' death was not his "sacrifice," but rather the final and fulfilling vindication of his own ministry, his purpose, and his self-hood. Love is called to create justice, to resist oppression, and to conquer evil; in so doing it is not essentially 'sacrificial' at all, but rather self-fulfilling. Its sacrifice does not have the quality of self-negation, nor even of self-denial. The love which is commanded and rendered possible

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1. Niebuhr has noticed this problem and criticized Brunner and Luther for this. But he himself has removed this practical approach to justice from the ideal of sacrificial love. cf. Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. II p. 195
2. Again, Niebuhr says Luther, Nygren and Brunner assert a passive love, which prevents action for justice, but for Niebuhr the necessity for action is not ideally Christian love. Nature and Destiny of Man, ibid. p. 194
3. Niebuhr asserts that ideally, love is non-resistance to evil, but Jesus says "do not resist one who is evil," a difference which does not justify Niebuhr's assertion. (cf. Mt. 5:39) This passage may be a reference only to "revenge" (cf. Good News Bible)

in history might never even notice its own sacrifice as such, but only as one element among others in a consistent self-authentication.

4. Practical Justice

We conclude this abbreviated study of Niebuhr with a critical sketch of his pragmatic approach to justice in this world. True justice, like true love, is rendered an impossibility in history because of the pervasiveness of freedom and sin. Only where there is the harmony and intimacy of love is justice really possible.[1] But where interests conflict there can be no simple approach to justice. Achieved justice is always judged by "the higher possibilities of love, which is at once the fulfillment and the negation of justice."[2] Justice is ideally defined by "the holiness" of God's love and forgiveness in the Atonement, the symbol of God's love as law.[3] The Cross is the perfection of agape which transcends all norms of human justice, and its radical character renders the quest for justice 'no simple possibility.'[4] This, Niebuhr thinks, is overlooked by Marxists and Liberals who have assumed that progress in the establishment of justice is really within human grasp.[5]

The implicit pragmatic solution is, for Niebuhr, some attempt to identify and actualize a "relative justice." Since the possibility of "unconditioned perfection in history" does not exist, "it is not even right to insist that every action of the Christian must conform to agape, rather than to the norms of relative justice and mutual love by which life is maintained and conflicting interests are arbitrated in history. For as soon as the life and interest of others than the agent are involved in an action or policy, the

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 271
2. ibid. p. 285; Brunner has complained that Niebuhr never states very specifically what he means by "justice". We should probably assume that it is both an ideal relative to the justitia originalis, and also a pragmatic ethical principle, "relative" to achievable equity, which usually has the character of law. cf. Outka, Agape, op. cit. pp. 78 ff.
3. ibid, Vol. II, p. 56
4. ibid. p. 74
5. ibid. p. 86

sacrifice of those interests ceases to be "self-sacrifice."[1] Here again we see how Niebuhr's definition of agape as "sacrificial love" is a presupposition which, if accepted, makes love in history unworkable, only "transcendently" effective. If Niebuhr's concept of practical justice were not so opposed to his ideal of love, or if the ideal itself could be made more relative to historical existence, we might have little cause to object. His practical approach to justice is indeed grounded upon the difficult problems of conflicting purposes which cannot be overlooked in any serious attempt to make justice a historical reality. He realizes that a contemplative love for God may be remote from the "loving action" which is necessary for faith to work through love. "It is an act rather than a thought which sets the Christ above history, and being an act, it is more indubitably set within history than a mere thought."[2] Nevertheless, the extent to which he sees Christ's action "above history" militates against a true application of Christ's ethic within it. As Charles West has noted, "ever again we see Niebuhr implicitly taking his commandments from somewhere in history itself rather than from Christ's relation to the redeemed man."[3] Although Niebuhr is critical of Luther for his diatribe against the peasants' attempt to gain freedom against their feudal princes, Niebuhr himself is unable to relate some consistent struggle for justice to the "sacrificial love" which ideally means non-violence and non-resistence to evil.[4] He does indeed assert that such a struggle is necessary, but in this assertion he perpetuates the opposition between Christian love and a genuine, practical struggle against oppression.[5] The end result is not so different from Luther's doctrine of the Two Kingdoms; Christianity is subordinated to the worldly requirement to combat anarchy at all costs.

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1. ibid. p. 88
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 92
3. Charles West, Communism and the Theologians, SCM Press, London, 1958, p. 147.
4. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 194.
5. ibid. p. 195

Thus, Niebuhr's approach to justice is finally as dualistic as his concept of love. His concept of historical justice, like Brunner's, is nearer the negative and legalistic character of law (nomos) than the positive and persuasive character of love. "The fence and the boundary line," he says, "are the symbols of the spirit of justice."[1] He tells us that, ideally, justice produces greater equality; but practically "the attainment of complete equality in society" is "impossible".[2]

> The perpetual recurrence of the principle of equality in social theory is a refutation of purely pessimistic conceptions of human nature, whether secular or religious. Its influence proves that men do not simply use social theory to rationalize their own interest. Equality as a pinacle of the ideal of justice implicitly points towards love as the final norm of justice; for equal justice is the approximation of brotherhood under the conditions of sin. A higher justice always means a more equal justice. Special privilege may be frowned upon more severely by those who want it than those who have it; but those who have it are uneasy in their conscience about it. The ideological taint enters into the discussion of equality when those who suffer from inequality raise the principle of equality to the definitive principle of justice without recognizing that differences of need or of social function make the attainment of complete equality in society impossible.[3]

This extract represents the typical subtlety in Niebuhr's characterization of love and justice which repeatedly asks us to accept an "ideal" which we find is impractical or impossible. Here we can certainly agree that the principle of equality is a refutation of pessimism, and that "a higher justice always means a more equal justice." But as we read on, we are required to sacrifice the ideal to the pragmatic. In this case, we are not allowed to keep the "principle of equality" because to do so would be an "ideological taint" of justice.[4] As equality is first proposed, then implicitly denied as a characteristic of justice, we cannot finally be sure just what justice means for Niebuhr.[5]

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1. ibid. p. 252
2. ibid. p. 255
3. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 254-255
4. On Niebuhr's accusation against Marxists for their "ideology", cf. Charles West, Communism and the Theologians, op. cit. pp. 158 ff.
5. cf. Gene Outka, Agape, op. cit. pp. 84-85

In any event, we begin to suspect that much of Niebuhr's programme is intimately bound up with a particular conception of "democracy" and pragmatic justice which seems to be associated with North America.[1] The "ideology" which Niebuhr finds in Marxists and Liberals may not be totally absent from his own interpretation. World hegemony of the stronger powers is "inevitable", he tells us. It is also preferable to an uncontrolled balance of power, which is anarchy.[2] With such an admission, love's capacity to create justice is submerged beneath a doctrine of pragmatism, and human Christian responsibility for the struggle for a more equal justice may be relinquished or forfeited. Of couse perfect harmony, perfect love, and perfect equality may in this world be impossible, but Christ's commandments and a faith that works through love are not concerned with what is or is not "possible ",but rather with a hopeful and active commitment. As Luther himself was constrained to assert, spiritus sanctus non est scepticus. Even for Luther, a doctrine of 'Two Kingdoms' could not keep faith apart from working, creative love. Niebuhr's love is not only dualistic, but also essentially pessimistic.

5. Summary and Critique

Who or what shall deliver us from this body of sin and death? Despite Niebuhr's reminder that agape is "paradoxically" related to eros as mutual love, we are still left with Nygren's dualism. The love of God is essentially alien to the loves of humanity, and the human, indeed the world, may be left in its sin, smothered with its own self-seeking loves, only "transcendently" touched by God's grace. The human in his pride is engrossed in a necessary corporate sin, and cannot pull himself out of it by his own efforts, yet God can barely get a foot in the door of "history" to provide a vision

1. cf. Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems, op. cit. especially chapter 3, "Why is Communism so Evil."
2. Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit., Vol II, p. 285

of the justitia originalis. Sacrificial love, the "disinterested" perfection which depends upon "perfect harmony" is an historical impossibility. Only at the end of history will God finally wield his vindicating word. Meanwhile humans are best advised to make use of the interval by not expecting too much from love. If they can manage to love each other mutually, it is probably as close as they can come to the divine.

As the ideal is inhibited by the claims and counterclaims of interested parties, justice must be administered pragmatically, yet without restricting a certain kind of "freedom" which is "the essence of man". On no account must humanity be led into the delusion of egalitarian utopianism, which is tantamount to the prideful messianism of apocalyptic. Opposing freedoms rule, yet God will have his day. Love is commanded, yet love requires harmony and is thus "impossible". Power corrupts, but power prevents anarchy. Humans are cautioned to sail between the Scylla of tyranny and the Charybdis of anarchy. A realistic love and a realistic justice appropriate to a history which only has meaning at its end is Niebuhr's gospel. Humanity is sinful being gazing longingly towards a reflected image of unrealizable "perfection". Nevertheless, the contradictions are only apparent; through faith there is "the paradox of self-realization through self-giving". God's grace, somehow, is still sufficient, and "the majesty of God" is not to be denied. Yet grace cannot remove the contradiction between God and human freedom. The Christ in us is not a possession but a hope; perfection is not a reality but an intention; peace is never an achievement but "the serenity of being completely known and all forgiven."[1]

It has been suggested that "an ideal which perennially reveals deficiencies" may be "practically irrelevant and theoretically confused."[2]

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1. Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 125
2. Gene Outka, Agape,

An ideal, of course, should reveal deficiencies in the behaviour of those who hold it in esteem. But when the ideal proves beyond the realm of human possibility, beyond history in its validation, and only "transcendently" effective in a world of freedom and necessity, then there may be something chronically wrong with the ideal itself. "Sacrificial love" and "relative justice", as Niebuhr has construed them, are not constituent to our "thesis".

III. Karl Barth: Love as Grace, Gratitude, and Action

Karl Barth's discussion of the problem of Christian love, as he summarized it in Volume IV, Part 2 of his Church Dogmatics, is, to a great extent, an attempt to correct many of the inadequacies which arose in interpretations of other twentieth century authors. Barth was not happy with Nygren's Lutheran position which through faith seemed to destroy the 'healthy distance' between God's love and the loves of human beings. Even faith could not totally change human nature so that the faithful human being becomes a "pipe" which receives from above and gives out below. The fact of human sin could not be so easily overcome. But on the other hand, Barth was not quite willing to believe that Christian love is so radically "sacrificial" that it must be set in an "impossible" frame of reference in this world, as Niebuhr implied. For Barth, Christian love is characterized by a call for the affirmation of true human nature through self-giving (Hingabe), in an active movement toward the neighbour. Human love may never be deemed the same in quality as God's love, but it may respond to and correspond with the love of God. God's love is not the "source" but rather the "basis" of that human love which is appropriate to human nature as God intended it. Although agape does not 'demand' its reciprocation, it is practically fulfilled only in the community of faith. Only where there is faith is that love which corresponds to the love of God affirmed in mutuality.

Barth's view is certainly not wholly consistent in the broad context of his works. Especially on the subject of eros he appears to contradict himself. But everywhere there is an emphasis upon God's love as grace, and finally even eros is subject to it. His approach is characterized by an eschatological tension, in which the human being is certainly in the world, but need not necessarily be of it. The key to the resolution of this tension, so far as is historically possible, is to be found not primarily in the human

capacity to believe, but rather in God's "overflowing love" which is persistently active in history.

> The Holy Spirit as the spirit of the Father and the Son... convinces us of the love of God for us which became an event in earthly history in the existence of Jesus Christ, and which is genuine and effective and immutable because it is an overflowing of the love which is in God himself.[1]

To such a love the human being may respond, in "imitation" of and "correspondence" with the love that creates love.

1. Human Nature and Human Loves

Barth is reluctant to adopt Nygren's technical definitions of agape and eros. Although agape does indeed imply a certain understanding of love which is relative to the Christian response of faith, Barth does not consistently admit that eros is totally alien to it. For example, he can speak of eros as "the secret of humanity," a gregarious instinct which has something in common with Feuerbach's "species consciousness". The Greeks were not wrong to grasp the fact that "the being of man is free, radically open, willing, spontaneous, joyful, cheerful, and gregarious."[2] "Man is human in the fact that he is with his fellowman gladly."[3] In another positive sense which resembles Brunner, Barth can speak of a "sanctified eros" in marriage, without which the idea of Christian marriage makes no sense. Marriage is validated by the balance of the two elements "self-giving" and "desire". Both may be legitimate, and both a part of "true eros". "What takes place between true lovers is understanding, self-giving, and desire...It may be safely and fearlessly described by the well-known term eros. If we think of eros only or primarily in the sense of desire, and more particularly of physical desire, we must not suppose that we have really understood what is here in question."[4]

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 352
2. Barth, C.D. III/2 p. 283
3. ibid. p. 278
4. Barth, Church Dogmatics III/4 p. 219

The two meanings of eros which we have just noticed fall, appropriately enough, within Barth's "Doctrine of Creation.", No matter how human nature is to be conceived, imagined, or characterized the elements of God's creatorship and human freedom must be preserved. Barth can allow no idea of love which militates against either. Barth therefore deviates from Nygren on the central issues of human freedom and divine creativity, which for Barth includes the idea of divine nurture. Agape does not and cannot contradict human freedom and the necessity for humans to make decisions. Eros cannot contradict God's sovereignty in creation: "If it is really God who rules the world and not the devil, does not every abyss - without ceasing to be such, and as such to be dangerous - have a bottom somewhere?"[1] But God's grace cannot simply be construed as a force which directly captures and subjugates human will so that the believer is a conduit for the love of God. "The first and evocative love is not the same as the love which is evoked. The relation between them is that of a word and answer, of permission and the use made of it, of command and obedience; not of the beginning and continuation of one and the same movement."[2]

It must be observed that there is the appearance of a contradiction as Barth tries to uphold both God's sovereignty and human freedom. Nygren and Brunner attempt to resolve the contradiction with the assumption that faith is able to lay hold of divine love in such a way that God's will becomes the will of the believer. Niebuhr, on the other hand, admits that such a correspondence between the divine and the human is not possible in a world of opposed freedoms, and relegates the problem to some context "beyond history". Barth does not solve the dilemma, but rather, refers it back to God. Human love must always be a free action, just as God's love is always his free action. The human is called to respond to the divine love.

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 741
2. ibid. p. 752

God's sovereignty is never to be challenged by human freedom, but at the same time human autonomy in decision making is crucial to human nature, and without it there is in fact no concrete humanity.

> God and man, the one as Creator and the other as his creature, do not exist on the same level. There is no rivalry between the divine freedom and the human. Thus the dependence of man's action on God's does not involve any weakening, alteration or finally destruction of its freedom and its character as decision. That human love is dependent on the divine love means that in its very freedom it can take place only on the basis of the latter, as a human response to the Word spoken in the love of God. If God did not love originally and properly, and if he did not love man, how could there be any reflection or analogy of his love in the love of man? Man never can or will take the initiative in love. He can and will love only because God has first loved, and loves, him. And if he loves for this reason, and therefore secondarily, this does not mean - the relationship is irreversible - that there arises any dependence of the divine love on his love, or determination of the divine action by his action. The love of God is the basis for that of man, but the love of man is never a basis for that of God. The love of God always takes precedence. It always has the character of grace, and that of man the character of gratitude. There always remains a great difference in the order, nature, and significance of divine and human love.[1]

For Barth human love is therefore different in quality from the divine love, and not even faith can destroy this inequity. But the faithful human may "imitate" the divine love freely, and his love may be "analogous" to the revealed love of God. But the human is not free to decide how God shall exercise his freedom, nor is the divine love to be made in the image of human loves (Barth's critique of Feuerbach!). The apparent contradiction between God's sovereignty and human freedom is not a question for the human being to solve. Freedom simply exists as a component of human nature, and because all humanity is subject to God's creation, every abyss has a bottom somewhere. The human being not only has the freedom to love, but he also "will" love, because God has loved, and will love even the human whose love is characterized by selfishness and still is prone to sin. God's effective will is that humanity too will love.

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 753

Despite Barth's admission that eros has a proper place in the scheme of creation, he nevertheless condemns eros as a grasping, self-seeking antithesis of the agape which is humanity's true norm. In agape "man is only truly and naturally and essentially a man."[1] Only in correspondence with that love which God has willed as the "life-act" of the Christian is humanity in accord with true human nature. "Agape-love takes place in affinity, eros-love in opposition, to human nature."[2] The first is the "Yes", the other the "No" to human life "willed and posited by God". Barth is careful to stress that both agape and eros are "historical determinations of human nature". He does not agree with Nygren that agape is divine love and eros is human love. Eros is essentially, in this respect, "an uncritical intensification and strengthening of natural self-assertion."[3] In effect it is a love-gone-wrong as it tries to sustain the creature in and for itself. As such it is opposed to the self-giving and hence self-affirming love which is shown to be possible for humanity in the revelation of God's love in the Incarnation, which is also a call for a corresponding human love. Barth agrees with Nygren that the two loves cannot be equated, synthesized, nor reconciled. Christian love is not the purified form or supreme climax of the "other" love. The "other" love is not a preparatory stage for Christian love. In fact, says Barth, the distinction between Christian love (agape) and the "other" love (eros) stresses "the wholly alien character of Christianity in relation to the world around."[4] The human loves in either one way or the other, or perhaps in both ways at the same time, but "where Christian love enters there always begins at once the unceasing controversy between itself and every other love...There can only be conflict and not compromise between Christian love and this other."[5]

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1. ibid. p. 743 2. ibid.
3. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 734
4. ibid. p. 735; This statement may not be reconcilable with the eros of the Doctrine of Creation; cf. CD III/4; pp. 219 ff, regarding the "true eros" of marriage.
5. ibid. p. 736

Yet the two modes of loving, the one appropriate to human nature, and the "other" inappropriate, both take place within the one free individual, who must decide between them. "It is merely the case that man does always encounter us in these two forms of love and to this extent in the corresponding forms of his nature."[1] For Barth there is no question but that human nature retains its integrity, and with it the propensity to good and evil, to just action and also to wrong choices. There is no magic formula to be derived from agape, and there is no dramatic change in human nature when an individual chooses agape over eros. Nevertheless the human may indeed decide for the right love which corresponds to his intended nature, and he may do so freely, joyfully, not in sacrifice of self, but rather in self-affirmation insofar as he gives himself to God and the neighbour.

Barth's usage of the idea of eros is, as Gene Outka has stressed, inconsistent and contradictory on the face value of Barth's declarations.[2] Nevertheless, his usage may be partially reconciled if we note that eros has a positive role to play within the scheme of creation only until it goes astray in human nature, becoming a grasping, acquisitive "denial of humanity."[3] As a social force and as a dynamic in marriage, eros contributes to God's purpose in creation; but when it seeks its own, becoming "wholly claim, wholly the desire to control," it acquires for Barth a negative value which opposes it to human nature intended and posited by God. Barth describes as eros a love which is on the one hand proper to creation but on the other a gross mutation of it. For this reason, his description of eros varies from positive to negative. The mistake perhaps is to assume that Barth is willing to apply a consistent meaning to either agape or eros in a technical definitive terminology.

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1. ibid. p. 742
2. Gene Outka, Agape, op. cit. pp. 223-224
3. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 746

Just as Barth varies in his description of eros, depending upon the context, he also varies in his description of agape. For example, Barth can use agape for both appropriate human love as intended by God, and God's love for humanity revealed in Christ. But it is clear that Barth will allow no equation of human and divine love.

Thus agape has, for Barth, at least two different meanings. Human love is not divine love, but agape represents both. Eros is both natural gregariousness and that passion which leads to procreation, but it is also the love-gone-wrong, a "denial of humanity". The implication from this is that Outka, but not Barth, is willing to apply technical connotations to the various words for love, following Nygren's precedent. Barth himself notes the dilemma of language in which there are not enough words for love; it is "an unfortunate circumstance that in English as in German (and presumably in Swedish) we suffer from the same poverty as Hebrew and have only the one word "love" to denote both eros and agape."[1] For Barth the problem is not in the definition but in the context. Both eros and agape take place in the same human being who may not be dissected in a dualism of concepts. "Yet the distinction and the necessity of deciding between them is perfectly clear from that which they have conceptually in common, and in the way in which they accompany one another in practice."[2] That which they have in common is a product of God's creation, and as such it has its own dignity and freedom and integrity; for it is nothing more nor less than human nature.

2. God's Love as Grace

The freedom in human nature cannot oppose God's freedom to love. Although eros as self-seeking, egocentric love is opposed to the self-giving love which God has intended for human nature,

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1. ibid. p. 741 Barth may be incorrect here, but we note the irony in his critique: The problem of Christian love cannot be solved by definition and terminology.
2. Karl Barth Church Dogmatics, IV/2, p. 744

both agape and eros fall under the effective authority of God's freedom and God's love.

> Even erotic man must and will be affirmed in and with the love which is from God...His erotic love will not be affirmed. But he himself will be affirmed as the man which he does not cease to be even as he loves erotically... And this affirmation proclaims his reconciliation; the fact that God has loved, and loves, and will love even him.[1]

The "immutability" of God's love, and the "constancy" of his action assure fallen humanity that human nature is not "thrown back upon itself," that even within the frustration of history God has willed that humankind can and "will" love, that God's love as grace is an immanent force in the human situation. Karl Barth's extensive references to the love of God, characterized also as the grace of God, cannot be adequately treated here. We may only observe a few essential characteristics of what Barth calls the "basis" (Grund) of human love. - God's primary love, which for Barth, is God's being. Because God's love is primary, there can be no dualism in human nature, humanity is not set ultimately over against itself. The God who created human nature does not and will not break his covenant with humanity; even where there is God's word of judgment against human sin and inaction, there is always also his work and word of grace.

For Barth God's nature is one and undivided. This nature however is manifested as the Being who loves and as his Being in freedom. In "the perfections of the divine loving", God is gracious, holy, merciful, just, patient, and wise. In "the perfections of the divine freedom" he is wholly one, omnipresent, constant, omnipotent, eternal, and glorious. As God, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, manifests each of these perfections, the others are manifested also. In addition God's person is especially and freely represented in the historical life, ministry, death, and

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1. ibid, p. 748

resurrection of Jesus Christ, the "Mediator" between all humanity and God in all his perfection.[1]

Having said all this, Barth is still willing to make a "genuine equation" of St. John's logion: "God is love" (I John 4:8).[2] God's being, says Barth, is his loving.[3] God's love, and only God's love, is the summum bonum, the highest good of human existence.[4] To say "God is" is to say "God loves."[5] God's love is totally reconcilable with his freedom. "The Divinity of the love of God consists and confirms itself in the fact that in himself and in all his works God is gracious, merciful, and patient and at the same time holy, righteous and wise."[6] God does not need to love humanity, yet he does so in a free "overflowing of his eternal love."[7] His love is not determined by nor can it be reduced to a "cosmic process," but he loves humanity irrespective of what humanity deserves or does not deserve, from a motive which is wholly his own, undeterminable by human speculation.[8] God's love "bears necessarily the character of mercy", loving humanity while the human is yet God's enemy.[9] God's love is never "appropriate" to humanity, but it is always "his free differentiation in our favour."[10] Yet God's grace is never "indulgent" toward sin; God takes sin seriously, and his love is "total grace for sinful man, but also total judgment over him."[11] "The sin of the one loved by him is a stain which cannot stand against the fact that God loves and gives himself for him, but must yield and perish. It is the work of the love of God to cause this stain to yield."[12]

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1 pp. 257 ff; 327 ff
2. CD IV/2 p. 756
3. CD II/1 p. 351
4. CD II/1 p. 276
5. CD IV/2 p. 756
6. CD II/1 p. 351
7. CD IV/2 p. 760
8. CD IV/2 p. 767 For Barth the question of God's "motive" is irrelevant.
9. CD II/1 p. 369
10. CD IV/2 p. 767
11. CD II/1 p. 366; IV/2 p. 772
12. CD IV/2 p. 772

Barth offers three definitions of divine love in which he summarizes God's love as the "basis" for human love. (1) God's electing love discloses his freedom to love humanity. "He loves the man whom he has made worthy of his love by electing and willing and determining him as his creature, but who for his part has made himself unworthy, proving himself undeserving of this love, adopting an attitude of hostility, so that in defiance of God's good will he can actually be only worthy of the divine hatred."[1] This freely electing love is "unconditional." although it does not mean that God relaxes his wrath. (2) God's purifying love is the simultaneous word of grace and judgment. God leads humanity to grace through judgment, liberating him from sin and freeing him for love.[2] (3) God's creative love causes those who are loved by God to freely and spontaneously love in response and correspondence to the primary love. But the response of love is not God's purpose in loving. He does not "demand" love, but his love has "the character of a liberation." "Surely it is not love, from the heart, or with the whole heart if there is any question of compulsion, if we have to love in the required fulfilment of duty or exercise of virtue." (Thus Barth criticizes, perhaps inadequately, Kierkegaard's concept of love as duty.)[3] God has no "need" of human love, and his love "has nothing whatever to do with the pleasure of a triumphant love which attains its desire." (This too is a critique of Kierkegaard; Barth's God is sufficient in himself, and his purpose in loving is not to be loved in return.)[4] The extent to which Barth takes the idea of God's creative love is shown by his exegesis of the commandment to love. Barth tells us that the "command" rests upon a mistranslation of the Hebrew word ahabta (Deuteronomy 6:5) which

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 767
2. ibid. p. 771 ff.
3. ibid. p. 781; Barth sees Kierkegaard's dutiful love as "an eros with its back to the wall." He criticizes S.K. for lack of emphasis upon grace, but probably misunderstands or ignores S.K.'s conclusion that love "should not need to be commanded." cf. Works of Love, op. cit. p. 344
4. Barth, CD IV/2 p. 777; cf. Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, op. cit. p. 33

is better rendered as "Thou wilt love the Lord thy God..." Hence, says Barth, the divine loving is effective toward the future, in the sense of Jeremiah 31:33: "I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." The "command" for Barth is really a promise, God's word of grace which is the extension of the Covenant. Hence he stresses that humanity is not so much commanded to love, but liberated from sin in order to love. "The love of God is the liberation of man for genuine love."[1] There is no implication that such a thing is "impossible" as we find in Niebuhr. For Barth, the liberation is "in the sphere and within the limits of human action, and thus to love in human fashion as God does in the divine."[2] As God creates love, shedding it abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5) Barth tells us that "certain men are made free and able to accomplish this imitation."[3] It is not that man must love, but that he can and may and will, simply because it is God's effective purpose for humanity, constantly nurtured in history by the influence of the Holy Spirit.[4]

Barth speaks of the love of God as "immutable," but God is also "holy mutability." God is best conceived as "constant" - "the same in every change."[5] God's love may not be understood as passive. If God were the absolute immobile, he would be death.[6] In the Old Testament, Barth reminds us, God is never characterized by love as a feeling or emotion, but rather by a love-in-action, "pure act". Hosea gives the formula for God's covenanted loving action toward his people: "When Israel was a child I loved him...and called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea 11.1). God as liberator of Israel is for Barth the whole basis of the Covenant, and the prior basis for the Torah. "The covenant relationship was not in the first instance

1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 777
2. ibid. p. 778
3. ibid. p. 780
4. ibid. p. 779
5. ibid. p. 352; CD. II/1 p. 496
6. CD II/1 p. 494

one of pure law or the will and action of God recognizable within it only the jealous assertion and validation of the claim of God to Israel's respect and obedience which resulted from his election... Behind the whole form of the covenant as Law and holiness there always stands the great context of the act of liberation (and the corresponding acts that followed) which was constitutive for the existence of Israel and quite unforgettable to it."[1] The impact of Barth's emphasis upon God's love as pure act for liberation of his people is also a dynamic call for an imitative human action which is liberating and justice-creating. The stress upon God as active, not passive, and upon human love as also active, not passive, implies a stringent obligation upon human beings to work for a positive, liberating justice. Barth's grounding of the covenant in God's action and not in God's law means that in the human sphere, justice is to be an active and dynamic objective unrestricted by legalistic constructs.[2] Law is only the servant of justice, and is not to be defined as justice. The basis for human justice, Barth makes clear, is God's action for the liberation of his people, prior to any legal institution, grounded on his outpouring love and not upon his "jealousy" or "demand".

Closely allied with God's love as pure act, is Barth's declaration that God is intensely affected by his union with humanity. In God's love which is also a movement toward sinful human beings, he has surrendered his impassibility, and no doctrine of impassibility is permissible in light of the Cross.[3] God suffers for and with us but his suffering is to be understood as a "suffering omnipotence." Good Friday, says Barth, is "omnipotence at work," suffering but also redeeming and liberating human beings from sin.[4] Unlike

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 762
2. There is a tentative relationship here between Barth's view of ethics and what has become known as "situation ethics." Joseph Fletcher quotes Barth: "There is a practical casuistry, an active casuistry, the casuistry of the prophetic ethos. It consists in the unavoidable venture. ..of understanding God's concrete specific command here and now" (Joseph Fletcher, Situation Ethics, SCM, London, 1966 p. 149) (CD. III/4 p. 9)
3. CD II/2 p. 164; II/1 p. 369
4. CD II/1 p. 607

Kierkegaard, Barth is not afraid to say that the Cross exalts humanity through divine suffering.

> He humbled himself to us and exalted us to himself. This is God's self-giving; his love. The revelation of God in the work of his Holy Spirit means the revelation of the covenant and the kingdom, the promise and the fulfilment, the will and the accomplishment of God in their necessary and indissoluble connection. It means the revelation of the one eternal act in which he has loved and loves and will love us in the power of his eternal love. It means the revelation of ourselves as those to whom God has turned in this act, and therefore as those who were and are and will be loved by him as the One who performs this act. In this act in which he willed to be and became ours, and we were to be and became his, God is the authoritative and powerful basis of the love which is the subject of our present enquiry - love as the human act corresponding to the act of God.[1]

Having established the "basis" for appropriate human love, as an active, free, suffering, immutable, omnipotent, and constant love of God for humanity, then and only then can Barth fully develop his idea of the content of that imitative, corresponding human love which is called agape.

3. Human Love as Gratitude

For Barth there is indeed an opposition between agape and eros, but he nevertheless insists that "a presentation of Christian love cannot live by this antithesis."[2]

> Where Christian love arises the other can only sink to the ground. When the sun arises, the shadows and mists in the valleys can only yield and disperse. Hence Christian love does not need to measure itself by eros-love, or to find strength and satisfaction in its difference from it. It lives its own life as the love which is true because it is grounded in God's love for man and not in man's self-love. It does so in antithesis to that other. But it does so as the love which is superior and triumphant in this antithesis. It is not, therefore, forced to insist on this antithesis.[3]

Barth is convinced that since eros remains a part of human nature, even for the Christian, the Christian may not pretend to be above the temptation to lesser loves than agape. Such eros is the general

1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 761
2. ibid. p. 746
3. ibid. p. 747

corruption of humanity which is common to all. "The Christian must love the heathen because he too loves with erotic as well as with Christian love, and is to that extent a heathen."[1] But the Christian is able to know that eros is, in the light of God's grace, "already routed". The Christian "holds to this truth and lives joyfully in this conquest of eros by agape."[2] The Christian is called to proclaim continually that the non-Christian is loved by God, that he is never cut off from God's self-giving love, and that the reconciliation of God with sinful humanity is initiated and achieved by God himself. Barth's concept of appropriate Christian love entails not only a response to God's grace but also an evangelical proclamation and affirmation that God's love is indeed unconditional. "If Christian love does not make this declaration to the non-Christian it is not Christian love."[3]

Although Christian love may not rest presumptuously in its own righteousness, it is nevertheless practically and functionally, "wholly but not exclusively", a product of the reception of faith. Barth is careful in his characterization of faith not to make "faith alone" the summation of Christianity. As we noticed in Chapter 1, it was exactly the over-emphasis upon faith that led Feuerbach to conclude that faith and love are contradictions. As Barth noted in his critique of Feuerbach, Luther's emphasis upon faith should not be adopted uncritically.

> Luther had a peculiar way of speaking of faith as an almost independent appearance and function of the divine hypostasis. Faith is able to do, and does, everything. It not only provides justification, and gives solace; it alone not only brings forth love and good works; it also overcomes sin and death, it blesses and redeems man. Faith and God belong together. As trust of the heart (!) it makes both God and idol, occasionally it can even be said to be a "creator of deity," even though only "within us." In any event, this extravagant view is in need of interpretation and confirmation. Now after Feuerbach, one may no longer repeat these things from Luther without some caution.[4]

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1. ibid. p. 751
2. ibid.
3. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/2 p. 748
4. Barth's Introduction to Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, Harper, 1957, pp. xxii-xxiii.

Barth insists that "the obedience of faith is followed by the obedience of love - in practice."[1] Faith and love are complementary; they are distinct but inseparable. Faith "works by love." Faith is essentially passive, receptive. But love is active, and for this reason, he says, love is the greatest over faith and hope. As faith is pure and total reception, love is pure and total self-giving. "As Christian faith is the human response to God's justifying sentence, so Christian love is the human response to his direction."[2]

Barth does not follow Nygren in tacitly equating faith with love for God. There seem to be two reasons for this. The first is that love is by nature active, and, grounded upon the active love of God for humanity, cannot be exhausted by the idea of faith, which is essentially passive and receptive. The first commandment, after all, is the command to love God, and this cannot be lightly reduced to the category of belief. Response to God's love entails an active love on the part of the receiver of grace, both towards God and towards the neighbour. The second reason is the total context of worship. (Barth admits that he was part of the movement which reacted against pietism.) Love for God, he affirms, can never be an appropriate attempt of humanity by which the human can hope to justify himself or reconcile himself with God. But on the other hand, Christians "need not be fanatically anti-mystical."[3] There may indeed be a proper place for Christian contemplation and for the joy which may proceed from it.

More importantly, a place must be left for prayer and praise, and for the whole joyful response of the Christian community which comes under the heading of worship. He asserts that, "No one can and will love God who does not believe."[4] As to the neo-orthodox reaction against pietism, Barth decided that love for God was no

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1. Barth, CD IV/1 p. 102
2. ibid.
3. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/1 p. 104
4. ibid.

longer the threat it had been in previous epochs: "We were a little late with our protest."[1] The pietistic eros with which Nygren concerned himself, the attempt to ascend to God according to the models of Plotinus and Proclus in neo-platonist doctrine, had ceased to be a realistic counter-force to agape. (The general acquisitive love, also called eros, by which egocentrism is enthroned in many ways, continued to be addressed by Barth.)

Barth concludes that there is both a vertical and a horizontal dimension entailed in the commandment to love God and the neighbour. They are "two spheres of activity which are inseparable but distinct."[2] "Christian love is at one and the same time love to God and love to the neighbour, and it is love to the neighbour because it is love to God."[3] "A love of God which does not involve also the required love of neighbour is not the required love of God."[4] "The pure and total reception of justification by faith alone cannot be separated from (God's) pure and total self-giving in love. The two are one and the same."[5] Because of God's total self-giving, he is infinitely worthy to be loved, and the Christian may love God properly insofar as he also loves his neighbour.

> ...agape-love consists in the fact that (the Christian) accepts God as his eternal counterpart, and therefore his own being as that of one who is elected by this God, being absolutely sheltered by his preservation and help, but who is also called by him to thanksgiving, responsibility, obedience and prayer. It consists in the fact that he is determined and ready to live from and to God to the best of his knowledge and capacity: not raising any claim; not trying to control God; not with the ulterior motive of winning God for himself or demanding anything from him; but simply because he is God, and as such worthy to be loved.[6]

It may be obvious then, that in Barth's theology one may not isolate and define separately the concepts of 'faith', 'love for God', and 'love for the neighbour'. These three components are

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1. CD IV/2 p. 795
2. CD III/4 p. 49
3. CD IV/1 p. 106
4. CD IV/2 p. 732
5. ibid. p. 733
6. ibid. pp. 743-744

intimately related and must remain so if they are to be an appropriate human response to the prior and basic love of God. Faith is essentially the reception of God's love. But faith "works by love", both by the love of God upon which it is grounded, and by the active love for the neighbour which is faith's essential complement. When faith is the conscious reception of God's self-giving love for the believer, a joyful and humble love for God is elicited. This love for God has the character of "gratitude " - gratitude for God's redemptive and liberating love. As a further expression of the same gratitude, the elicited love for God, in a vertical dimension, has also a spontaneous and unselfish horizontal dimension, which is an active, genuine, and freely decided love for the neighbour.[1]

Since the love which is appropriate to the human's true nature is based upon God's love which is "pure act," Barth insists that Christian love must always be active. "God is not idle but active. For good or evil, therefore, man must be active too." Christian love is "an active being of man in God."[2] Thus Barth differs from Niebuhr, whose characterization of sacrificial love most often entails the feature of passivity, even a non-resistance to evil. Barth's love is an active response, in gratitude to the love of God. Christian love may not be contained by the idea of feeling, emotion, or passion. Agape is not itself passion, but it claims all passion, says Barth, (perhaps in criticism of Kierkegaard's assertion that Christian love is a passion akin to the "highest passion" of faith).[3] Of course Barth does not imply that love is a function of reason, and he thus avoids what Kierkegaard considered to be Hegel's mistake. For Barth a corresponding love of humanity to the basic and prior love of God must be, in the limited and conditional context of history,

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1. It is not self-evident that human love can be both spontaneous and freely decided, but Barth does not seem to notice any contradiction. Barth wants to suggest that human love is always a free action, and that it is not the fulfilment of a "duty." Nevertheless he does speak of love as "obedience." cf. CD IV 1 p. 102; compare CD IV/2, p. 781.
2. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/1 p. 103
3. CD II/2 p. 719.

a self-giving action toward and on behalf of the neighbour. Barth is not concerned with Nygren's question of motivation and value. For Barth the Christian loves the neighbour whether there is anything worthy to be loved or not. Christian love is not concerned with value or the lack of it in the neighbour. Barth's agape is not necessarily "unmotivated" as it for Nygren, but Barth does declare that there can be no "ulterior motive."[1] For Barth the New Testament is a continuation of the Old Covenant, and only an active love fulfils the law as it is fulfilled and completed by Christ. "The law requires a definite action; this action is love."[2] Our Christian love arises and takes place as the human act which is, in its own sphere, "analogous" to the "pure act" of God.

Although Barth does not follow Niebuhr in asserting that genuine love requires harmony for its actualization, it is only truly consummated in a community of faith. Only where there are believers can Christian love find its hope of mutuality, since only in such a community is love understood as a "life-act" of the Christian based upon the "pure act" of God. For Barth there is no doubt that Christian love is an action directed outward toward the world. But the special knowledge and responsibility of agape is to a large extent held within "a closed circle" of believers.

> The love of God in Jesus Christ is decisively, fundamentally and comprehensively his coming together with all men and their coming together with him. This coming together is not deserved by man but forfeited. Yet it has been accomplished by God in his free grace, defying and overcoming the sin of man. As this coming together the love of God active and revealed in Jesus Christ is the fulfilling of the covenant by him. It embraces realiter both the world and the community, non-Christians and Christians. But the knowledge and proclamation of it is a matter only for the Christian community.[3]

Love as it is willed and posited by God for humanity must be a love which understand that God is its ground, that only a simultaneous love for God and for the neighbour is the affirmation of

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1. CD IV/1 pp. 106-107
2. CD IV/2 p. 730
3. CD IV/1 p. 103

authentic human nature. The Church, therefore, is entrusted with the proclamation of genuine human love to the world, and with the consummation of this love among its members. Christian love cannot be addressed to or understood by everyone; the Church must be prepared to live actively as a corporate witness of God's love for humanity and of the appropriate human love for one another, nevertheless. And in the Church is the unique and effective work of the Holy Spirit, encouraging and calling forth love each for the other. Love in the Church has the character of "an upbuilding of the Christian community," inseparable from the work of the Holy Spirit.[1] As such it is "brotherly love". But love in the Church also has the character of love for the neighbour, of the person who may yet be a brother, and so the Church must never confine its love to an elite society.[2] The love in the Church which is yet directed outward to the non-Christian is appropriate to the two planes upon which the history of salvation rests. The one is between God and Church, and is a relationship of mutual love, symbolized by the Chruch's love for Gcd and the mutual love between Christians. The other is "between man and man" which is expressed in the Christian's horizontal love for persons who do nct yet realize the benefits of genuine mutual love. The mutual love which Christ encourages among his disciples, and the joy which results from the consummation of such a relationship, is in fact the stimulus for the Christian's "love-act" toward the world. For Barth, such mutuality and "peace" is realized only in the believer, and is then focussed outward toward every neighbour. Mutual love in the ccntext of community, between God and humanity, and between human beings, becomes the goal toward which, with the help of the Holy Spirit, Christian action is directed.

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1. CD IV/2 pp. 730-779
2. ibid. pp. 807-808

Nevertheless, the Christian is not to think that he can achieve harmony in the world through his limited works of love. Such a consummation is conceivable only through God's grace, and certainly not through some idealistic notion of progress (i.e. liberal theology). But the love in the Church, as a joyful response to the love of God, is nevertheless an effective witness for the love God has intended for the world, and as such the Church's love is not to be separated from God's saving action in and for the world through the work of the Holy Spirit. The mutual love in the Church is dynamically related to God's love for the world; it is not the prerequisite of love, as Niebuhr would imply, but rather it is the basis and model for a "worldwide fellowship".

> What Christians decidedly owe to the world is just that they should love one another in this way. In so far as this love is alive among Christians, in all its depth and reality, with all the joy and sorrow it brings, with all its fervour that must not be confused with passion, the Church is edified, the good work which God requires takes place, not only in the inner circle of Christians, but with the creation and maintenance of this circle for everyone and for the whole world. In this good work every individual Christian has his share as he, too, is one who loves with this supreme realism. In so doing, he will give what is due to all his neighbours. Thus the special fellowship of the Church, whose formation and preservation is the basic divine purpose, does not mean an absolute separation, but is the basis of a worldwide fellowship. Protesting against the form of this world, the Church cannot be against but only for the men who are still caught up in this world.[1]

Love in the Church is, for Barth, an essential element in God's plan for the world. Nevertheless, the Christian must not rest content in the mutuality of this love. Even Christian love is characterized by a constant call for decisions, for a willingness to love those we may not like, and for an inclination toward a future which only God can effect, and which is to be completed through and in spite of all the suffering, sin, and frustrations of history. Love in the Church is never a transformation of human nature, for the Christian continues to love inadequately and "erotically". But through

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/2 p. 720

God's grace and the effective work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, there is the assurance of God's love-in-action which also elects and purifies and creates love in the human sphere which is appropriate to God's good creation. Thus there is reason for hope, but not for complacency; for faith but not for egocentric piety; and for an active love in this world which is proper to human limitations yet not concerned with all the "ifs and buts". In the light of God's basic, self-giving, and overflowing love Christians are "awakened to faith, quickened in love, and enlightened in hope."[1]

4. Summary: A Love Inclined Toward Justice

Despite the apparent inconsistencies which have been noted (especially by Outka) in Karl Barth's theology, there is nevertheless a broad inner consistency in his work. If we seek a theological ground for the intimacy of love with a capacity to create justice, it is evident that Barth's characterization goes farther toward satisfying this criterion than any of the other "neo-orthodox" theologians we have considered. The advantages of Barth's thought on the idea of love are due to the following factors.

(1) Barth's treatment of the idea of faith is qualified by his treatment of God's creating and nurturing grace, and also by an insistence that faith always "works by love". Faith is passive and receptive, and is thus actually subordinate to love, which must always be active. Barth thus avoids the "faith alone" emphasis found in Luther, but which is nevertheless tacitly adopted by Nygren, Brunner, and Niebuhr. For the latter, (Christian) love is a derivative of faith; but for Barth, the emphasis is upon God's love, which <u>through</u> faith is able to create human love appropriate to God's purpose for humanity.

(2) Barth's idea of the love which is proper to God's good creation is a love which is characterized by action. Human love should correspond to God's self-giving action and therefore must be active, focuss-

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1. Karl Barth, <u>Church Dogmatics</u>, IV/1 p. 153.

ed toward the neighbour horizontally, as it is focussed toward God vertically. As we have noticed, love-as-action in Barth's work is quite different from the love which is passive in Niebuhr's. Similarly, for Barth, the love which is self-giving is an active movement of self-affirmation, while for Niebuhr Christian love is a sacrificial action characterized by self-denial. While Barth does not like the term "self-love", he nevertheless endorses what might be considered a proper love for self, insofar as human love is an active and free self-giving of oneself for and on behalf of the neighbour.

(3) Barth stresses and maintains the concept of God's creation, which is not to be overshadowed by a concept of the Fall. Although sin is a real fact of human existence, it is finally no match for God's grace. Hence Barth is not afraid to use the concept of eros in numerous contexts and with different meanings. As a gregarious instinct it is proper to God's creation, and as an uncritical strengthening of natural self-assertion, it is egocentric and opposed to agape. But agape does not change human nature, nor can it be given a technical definition, quantified and captured "like a bird in flight". Barth thus avoids the tendency toward an unbiblical and artificial distinction of definitive terms for love, such as is found in Nygren, and adopted by many others, such as Outka.

(4) Finally, with regard to the capacity of love to create justice, Barth is much more insistent than either Brunner or Niebuhr that love is possible in history, that Christian love is required to "protest" against the form of this world, and that Christians may never be complacently apolitical.[1]

In criticism and question of Barth's idea of love, we can only mention without resolving two major dilemmas which Barth has

1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/2 pp. 720 ff. We shall note in the following chapter some of the important implications of Barth's "political " theology.

perhaps failed to solve satisfactorily.

(1) The first is the question of the difference between divine and human love. Barth insists with Kierkegaard that God's love is "qualitatively" different from the human. The agape of God is not the agape of humanity, because God's existence can never be too closely allied with human being. Barth demands that God and humanity be kept at a "healthy distance" from each other; Nygren and Luther had wished to make God's will and human will essentially the same, when the believer becomes a conduit for God's love. Barth is no doubt right to preserve the freedom of human nature so that agape is not to be seen as determined by God. But on the other hand, one cannot escape the notion that it may still be the same love, yet somehow attenuated, which begins with God, that Christians are asked to show to each other and to the world. I am not convinced that God's love and human love are qualitatively different, although they may be different in form, energy, or capacity.

(2) Secondly Barth is perhaps extreme in his allegation that the commandment to love is not a command but a prophecy. Even if the Hebrew of Deuteronomy (ahabta) is mistranslated into Greek as an imperative, there is too much 'demand' for love in the New Testament, and particularly in the ministry of Christ, to escape the conviction that love is not somehow 'commandable'. As such, there may yet be something to be said for Kierkegaard's view of love as a "duty", which remains such, even though the believer becomes more and more "intimate" with the commandment, and thus "should not need to be commanded." No doubt it is God's will that humans shall love and "will" love, that God's will is to be written in human hearts according to the prophecy of Jeremiah. But nevertheless, there seems to be something in the call for justice in the Old Testament, and in the call for consistent obedience in the New, which cannot be exhausted by such a prophecy. "Duty", in active response to the call for obedience to the command to love the neighbour as oneself,

is not likely to be deleted from the requirement for justice without the simultaneous rise of a certain dangerous complacency.

APPENDIX II, PART TWO

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON "NEO-ORTHODOXY"

The neo-orthodox movement was born out of protest. As such it suffered from a (perhaps necessary) tendency toward exaggerated emphases. It was doing battle on three initial fronts, to which more were added as the twentieth century embroiled itself in conflict. They were: (1) the historical optimism of protestant liberal theology, which tended to place too much 'faith' in the human capacity for good, with a resulting attenuation of the idea of sin and of the radical nature of the Atonement; (2) Roman Catholic theology in general, which effectively tended to reduce the biblical witness in favour of scholastic and ecclesiastical tradition; (3) popular pietism in various forms, not the least of which was the individualistic salvation emphasis of Protestant evangelicals, at the expense of a genuine interest in social tragedy. In the light of the Russian Revolution, a fourth "front" was encountered as mass unemployment, political extremism, galloping inflation, and trade unionism followed the Versailles Treaty with (4) threats of civil anarchy. We must also list, as a fifth, the rise of fascism as Europe and the world set a course for (5) yet another world-war. If, as has been alleged, history seemed to be too much for the liberals, we must not ignore the dramatic stress which history placed upon all Christian theology, during the first half of the twentieth century. Neo-orthodox theology, then, can hardly be characterized outside of the context of "crisis" in which it was born. Because of the magnitude of the continuous conflict, we may not casually criticize, from the armchair of the nineteen-eighties, the battlefields of the twenties, thirties, and forties. Nevertheless, the battlefields of today are somewhat different, and an uncritical adoption of yesterday's protest may not solve today's problems.

In our brief consideration of "Luther's legacy", four questions were suggested which theology must "answer" if it is to "go beyond" Luther. These concerned: (1) the relation of human sin to divine creation; (2) the relation of faith to love; (3) Christian love's capacity to create justice in this world; and, (4) the integrity of human nature, somehow "created in God's image." Under these headings, I will attempt to illustrate very generally some broad strengths and weaknesses of the neo-orthodox theologians' treatment of love.

1. Human Sin and Divine Creation

It is all too obvious that humanhity cannot, by its own boot-straps, pull itself out of the mire of sin, injustice, and violence any more today than it could during the first world-war. Naive optimism about human progress can no longer be the innocent and hopeful assumption of a Christian theology. We owe a painful debt of gratitude to the neo-orthodox theologians for asserting that human love, ordinarily conceived, cannot by itself be the content of the Kingdom of God. Pride, greed, envy, and covetousness, - in short egocentric self-love - are not just private sins. In their corporate forms they have the capacity to destroy the earth, even more so today than forty years ago. Nygren, Brunner, and Niebuhr were right to say, with Luther, that the sin of hubris, superbia, or amor sui may indeed be the sin from which others are most often derived. But with this emphasis upon the sin of self-love and the horrible expressions of it in history, there was sacrificed a certain essential hopefulness which characterized the liberals' naivete, but which is also a common element in the New Testament. Paul's talk about hope and peace seemed often to be overlooked in favour of his language about sin and faith. Agape was defined more as a function of faith than as an attribute of hopeful humanity.

Karl Barth, however, was able to salvage something of the liberals' optimism, without founding that optimism within humanity

itself. In a sense, he even elevated it. "Every abyss," he said, "without ceasing to be such and as such to be dangerous, has a bottom somewhere." That bottom, Barth could say when others could not, is the Grund of God's own love, a grace which envelops humanity even in its sin and pride. Even the Fall could not ultimately separate humanity from the love and grace of God. Hope was reclaimed from the liberals, but it was given the content not of human love and historical progress, but of God's own radically different love and unopposable covenant with humanity.

The Fall cannot be lightly dismissed. But on the other hand, the conception of God as an effective, concerned, and continuously creative God of love can not finally be reconciled with an ultimate Fall into hell, either within or outside of history. Neither can "faith alone" be satisfactorily posited as a replacement for salvation by works or "merit." For Nygren and for Brunner, and partially for Niebuhr, the sin of pride is primarily the sin of Adam, a revolt against God. But as I have suggested, the most destructive and dangerous Fall is better characterized by the sin of Cain, the revolt against one's brother which is ipso facto a revolt against God. As I have also sought to show, while the sin of Cain is the most dangerous and potentially devastating for history, the "mark of Cain," is the most radical authentication of God's sustaining and creative nurture. It is God's will that Cain will overcome sin, in history, in the city of Cain. God's grace, in active support for Cain as he learns to be his brother's keeper, is Cain's only hope.

Nygren and Brunner, concerned with the pride and fall of Adam, his eros and self-love, set redemption in the work of Christ, the second Adam, which only becomes effective through faith. But faith is an act of "obedience," and as such it is the human's responsibility to manufacture it, as it were, ex nihilo, out of nothing. The importance of faith is thus overstressed to the extent that it dismisses

the continuously creative love of God in bringing sinful humanity back to himself. Niebuhr, however, tacitly limits the love and creative nurture of God by allowing it to be opposed in history by human freedom. Thus, while God's love is "transcendently" present in history, the real work of grace is reserved for the end of history.

Barth's conception of God who has been eminently active in history in light of his covenant with Abraham (and conceivably since creation itself) offers a more satisfactory reconciliation of the antithesis between human sin and God's good creation. The creation does not stop with the Fall, nor is it ultimately opposable by human freedom. God's grace extends even to the human caught up in erotic loves, and to the society which is engaged in corporate self-love. God's nurture, his creative and acting love, cannot be separated from his covenant with humanity, nor from the Cross which reveals both God's nature and human nature in its true essence. Thus God's action is action <u>in</u> history, a judgment on sin, while at the same time a patient and continuous creation of historical humanity in spite of it. God's saving grace is inseperable from his creative love, incorruptible by human sin, unopposed by human freedom, and independent of human faith.

2. The Relation of Faith to Love

Perhaps because Barth had read Feuerbach as well as Kierkegaard, he was sensitive to the possibility for faith to militate against the idea of love, so that there might result a contradiction between them. Barth therefore exercised caution in claiming that love cannot be separated from and is a complement of faith in God. Nygren, Brunner, and Niebuhr, however, did not exercise this caution, and in all of the above we find the idea that "love is a derivative of faith" (Niebuhr). But while Nygren and Brunner adopted Luther's notion that <u>agape</u> flows directly from God through the faithful Christian, to the neighbour, Niebuhr and Barth believed that sin was able

to interupt the flow. Barth then separated totally the love of God from the loves of human beings, while Niebuhr admitted that God's love might be only partially present insofar as human nature is not blessed with harmony, even among Christians. In a special way, Barth proclaimed, Christian love as a love that God has intended for all humanity is present in the Church. Niebuhr, however, could note that only where there are two mutually loving parties do we really have a context of harmony and thus the love which Christ commands. Nevertheless, humanity has a vision of that love, the justitia originalis, which may slowly be put to more and better effect within human relations. But there must be no mistake that the love which is possible in history is ever fully the "sacrificial love" revealed by Christ. The vision of that perfect love is in fact the continuous conviction of sin, showing us that our loves are not that which God requires.

Since Niebuhr's concept of the justitia originalis is common to all people, it might be argued that his view of love is really more applicable to persons who stand outside the Christian faith, and thus, perhaps, it is more effective in history, because it makes no pretence, in the guise of mutuality, to be exclusive to faith or Christianity. In this view, Niebuhr's love is more "realistic" because, while admittedly not "perfect," it is still able to be put to work in its somewhat attenuated form. Barth, meanwhile, would continue to insist upon a "self-giving love" which is not really possible or understandable to all, and is thus somewhat idealistic or "ideological."

On the premiss that "a little is better than nothing," we certainly might entertain Niebuhr's "realistic" alternative, based upon the good that may come of mutual self-interest. The problem with this, however, is that even secular humanity is very able to recognize "mutual self-interest" as precisely that, and not as love at all. Certainly the economic systems of the North have been

severely criticized by the South for exactly this assumption in relations with poorer neighbours. As I have attempted to show, Niebuhr's concept of "sacrificial love" is so conceived as to make it unachievable in history, but it is not necessarily "Christian." Christ's love is certainly conceivable in more historically possible models than sacrifice, and an unrealizable hypostasis of sacrificial love is not the love which is commanded by Jesus. If it is an unrealizable self-negation, passive in the face of evil, and unable to resist it, which is Niebuhr's love "derived from faith," then there is something wrong with the faith and the love. And if Niebuhr's true interest is in such mutual relations as are convenient within history, we must still be hesitant to adopt "mutual love" as a historical blessing, for enlightened self-interest in individuals or corporate bodies may still be seen for what it is even in secular society, and particularly by those who become the victims of this approach.

I find Barth's complementary treatment of faith and love more satisfactory than the other neo-orthodox theologians'. Barth could say that both Christians and non-Christians truly love, both in the sense of agape as "self-giving" and in various sense of eros, the "secret of humanity." The difference for Christians, is that they know that they are loved by God, that the revealed love of God in Christ is also the revealed true nature of humanity, and that they are witnesses to God's love for humanity and true human love (agape) in history. Just as all humans love, from time to time, properly, Christians have an additional responsibility to make their love correlate with the active, creative love of God. Thus Christian love must be active in history, just as faith is the passive reception of God's active love. For Barth, the question of "harmony" or "mutuality" is irrelevant for a love which is characterized by a self-giving self-authentication, simultaneously to God and the neighbour. Only as the love in the Church does indeed bear witness to the love which Christ intends among his disciples do

harmony and mutuality pertain to Christian love. As such it is an active witness of God's love for the whole world, eschatologically related to the role of the church in proclaiming the Kingdom of God which is radically different from this world.[1]

3. Love and Justice

The relationship between love and justice, considered according to the constructs and values of moral philosophy, is, of course, a much greater discussion than I am able to treat. Among the neo-orthodox theologians which we have considered, only Anders Nygren (typically) has an unequivocal approach to the problem. Nygren asserted that love and justice are absolutely incompatible, as demonstrated by Jesus' parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16). As Outka has noted, Nygren's concept of justice is based upon a particular understanding of justice as "to each according to his merit or works." Nygren observes that since God's love is spontaneous, it cannot be conditioned by value, worked for or otherwise inherent in the beloved. Human love as agape is to be based upon such a spontaneous love, and the concept of equality does not enter into relationships which are truly governed by agape.

Brunner is legalistic in his correlation of love to justice. He can say that justice is requisite for love, and also that "perfect justice is a self-contradictory term because the perfect can never be merely just."[2] As I have demonstrated above, Brunner's idea of justice very nearly approaches the idea of law, and because of this conception of justice, Brunner, like Nygren, cannot allow himself to say that justice proceeds from love, only that justice (i.e.legal equity) is required for love's fulfillment. This same conception

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1. Gene Outka has misunderstood Barth in thinking that, for Barth, a "faith-state" conditions whether and not only how an agent loves. Barth does indeed stress the special love which is realizable in the church, but he does not imply that love is exclusive to the church, even though the love which is intended by God for human beings is most realizable where reciprocation is possible. cf. Outka, Agape, op. cit. p. 212
2. cf. Outka's discussion of Brunner's concept of justice, ibid. pp. 81-82

of justice has led Brunner, and to a certain extent, Niebuhr, to oppose utopian projects which may bring forth "anarchy." The implication is that love is insecure in anarchy, and therefore a legal "order" is required if love is to be in any sense realizable. (The neo-orthodox fear of anarchy cannot be totally removed from the social evils and upheavals which were common in the first part of this century.)

Niebuhr's concept of justice is much more complex than Brunner's. It is both an ethical ideal and a pragmatic, legalistic restriction of "the fence and the boundary line." Ideally the justice which is conceivable in a relation of mutual love and harmony should produce greater equity. But because the harmony is not achievable, a "relative justice" must be history's norm. Practically, Niebuhr's characterization of justice as always less than the idea, conditioned by the frustrations and ambiguities of historical existence, has much to commend it.[1] Christians must be prepared to admit that the justice which is demanded of their love is "no simple possibility." The Christian life has no claim to a sterile atmosphere where confrontation and opposing arguments are non-existent. Nevertheless, I think that Niebuhr was too ready to admit the "impossibility" of justice systems construed by "utopian" ideals. When he said that "a higher justice always means a more equal justice," he was right. But when he qualified the statement to prohibit "those who suffer from inequality" from raising "the principle of equality to the definitive principle of justice," he began to insert North American values into structures and systems yet to be conceived.[2]

Karl Barth's 'inclination' toward a love that creates justice, the primary criterion of our "thesis," has already been discussed

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1. It must be admitted that Niebuhr's call for a "relative justice" within secular society has had its discernible effect, especially in the North American political sphere. Thus we must not be too quick to accuse him of failing to employ Christian values in effecting such justice as may be possible. Nevertheless, a relevant or relative justice in secular society does not necessarily conform to that justice which we may affirm as proceeding from genuine love.
2. cf. above p. 36.

(above, pp. 57 ff). As we have noted, Barth's concepts of love and justice do not merely begin with Christ but arise from the earliest covenant-statements of the Old Testament. God's continuous action in human history is a liberating action, which frees humanity from sin and for service on many levels. Faith only "works" by an active love, in which the person who is loved by God gives himself to his neighbour, for his neighbour's service, and in the interest of his neighbour's needs.

> ...the human righteousness required by God and established in obedience - the righteousness which according to Amos 5:24 should pour down as a mighty stream - has necessarily the character of a vindication of right in favour of the threatened innocent, the oppressed poor, widows, orphans, and aliens. For this reason, in the relations and events in the life of his people, God always takes his stand unconditionally and passionately on this side and on this side alone: against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly; against those who already enjoy right and privilege and on behalf of those who are denied and deprived of it. What does all this mean? It is not really to be explained by talking in abstracto of the political tendency and especially the forensic character of the Old Testament and the biblical message generally. It does in fact have this character and we cannot hear it and believe it without a sense of responsibility in the direction indicated.[1]

Although this statment alone may be 'unequivocal' enough to ascertain Barth's view of the relation between love and justice, he constantly refused to give specific content the kind of justice which might be demanded in any given era. For example, he refused to follow Brunner and Niebuhr in condemning communism, unequivocally, on the assumption that God's will and purpose for humanity may yet be found to lie in systems which seem alien to the values and ideals of the present day.[2] He soundly condemned Naziism, however, and refused to entertain its legitimation on the principle that any order is better than anarchy. Barth consistently asserted that Christians must protest and object to injustice, in whatever system or order it is found. We have already noted that Barth saw justice as prior to law, and upon which all law must be dependent if law is to be

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1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics II/1 p. 386
2. cf. Barth, Against the Stream, edited by Ronald Gregor Smith, London, 1954, pp. 34 ff.

just. Although Barth does not tell us in what form or under what system justice shall best be achieved in history, God's own justice-creating and liberating action is the Christian's mandate. A justice which is imitative of God's can best be discerned in the light of Amos' prophecy, a justice which rolls down like a flood upon the oppressed. Barth wastes no time discussing the 'viability' of such a justice;[1] his assumption is simply that God, and therefore the faithful Christian, must be "against those who already enjoy right and privilege and for those who are denied and deprived of it,"... "passionately."

4. The Integrity of Human Nature

The agape/eros dualism in human love which arose with Nygren has been, to a certain extent, adopted by all of the neo-orthodox theologians. Brunner as we have seen, attempted to maintain the distinction but was unable to do so consistently, for example, in his doctrine of Christian marriage. Niebuhr generally avoided the terms, but nevertheless developed an implicit dualism between the idea, harmonious, and sacrificial love revealed through the justitia originalis and the realistically achievable loves of human beings in history, characterized by mutuality. Karl Barth, as I have shown, refused to capture agape "like a bird in flight," but grounded this human love upon the love of God, active and present in history. Barth also spoke of eros in various contexts, as a gregarious instinct proper to the doctrine of creation, and also as an "uncritical strengthening of natural self-assertion," the antithesis of agape. For Barth, both eros and agape occur in the same human being, and agape does not necessarily intimate a person's salvation, for he is still

1. This may be consistent with Barth's "negative" approach to the whole discussion of "Christian ethics." Barth eschews "ethical systems" because the "ethical question...can be solved only as it was originally put - by the grace of God, by the fact that this allows man to actually to be the answer." (II/2 pp. 516 f.) That is, it is only by practical human action in the world that appropriate action is discussed, and by no prior system or casuistry which implicitly limits what God requires.

prone to eros. On the other hand, eros does not condemn the human being, for all humans, qua human, love from both selfish and unselfish motives.

Barth's "dualism" is of a different kind, for the dualism here is not within human nature, but between the love of God and the love of humanity. Although the New Testament speaks of agape as both God's love and human love Barth insists that the two are qualitatively different. He will not subscribe to Nygren's notion that eros is human love while agape is divine. Barth insists upon a theology of love which keeps God's gracious love out of the grasp of humanity. The divinity of human love was the assumption of the anthropological theology manifested in Feuerbach, and followed in different forms by the liberal theologians. Even as the faithful person loves in the sense of self-giving agape, for Barth the love may only be imitative of the divine love, but it can never be the divine love. There must always be preserved that healthy distance between God and humanity. We have observed that Luther's idea of the image dei is dependent upon faith. A person would be created in the image of God "by faith," or insofar as he believes. Barth does not allow faith to play such a role, nor does he allow the inadequate loves in human nature to be construed as originating in God himself. Human freedom, for Barth, is such that it can never be completely overcome by God's direct love, so that human love has the character of the divine love.

In this, Barth may be unnecessarily cautious. It is not necessary to make the human into a god in order to say that there may be some of the divine creative energy immanent within the ordinary loves of human beings. This point may not be easily resolved, and certainly Barth was adamant about it throughout his career. Nevertheless there may be the vestiges of dualism in Barth, as in the other neo-orthodox theologians, whenever he draws a strict dividing line

between God's love and human love. Surely there is a distinction between God and humanity, on the evidence of sheer human limitation in time and space. But if there is anything divine about the human, if the human does have some capacity for self-transcendence, if Christ's love is able to enter into humanity in such a way that new justice may be created in the human sphere where it did not exist before, then it seems that we may yet be able to assert that humanity has a limited aura of divinity about it (John 17:21-23; and especially vs. 26; also Romans 5:5). If God has indeed entered into human history, incarnated as a human being, then humanity need not be conceived as alienated from itself nor from its origin. Given that 'knowledge,' despite our tendency to sin and inaction, there may be a few beautiful moments when each person may humbly and gratefully acknowledge that his love is indeed greater than time and space, uncorrupted by self-interest, as it reaches out toward the beloved in a joyful celebration of authentic humanity which is, somehow, also divine.

5. Conclusion

It should now be obvious that in my view Karl Barth has gone well "beyond" Luther in offering solutions to the theological "questions" which Luther has left us. Barth has shown, where Nygren, Brunner, and Niebuhr could not consistently do so, that human sin is not able to contradict or ultimately oppose God's purpose and plan in creation. The Fall is not bottomless, for its 'floor' is the love of God. Neither is humanity thrown back upon the 'happy chance' of faith for salvation. God's nurturing and unopposable love is continuously active and creative in history and beyond it to provide for human redemption and liberation, from sin and from every other impediment to fellowship with the Creator. Barth has demonstrated by God's continuous and covenanted action with humanity in history that God's love is active in creating justice for the

poor and the oppressed. This action is evident in the witness of the Old Testament; it reaches its liberating apex at the Cross; and it continues to work through the Holy Spirit wherever the Church is gathered. The love which is revealed at the Cross is capable of human imitation in history, so that the justification which was accomplished there may be imitated in the human sphere to create justice on earth. Finally, in light of the Incarnation, the true identity of human nature as a being which gives itself selflessly, to and on behalf of God and the neighbour, is revealed and made possible in human history. The person who realizes this event in faith and in the community of believers has an additional capacity to show forth the love which is the attribute of genuine human nature, self-giving agape. But because the human being is still caught up in erotic loves, limited by time and space, he may not rest complacently in the assurance of his own righteousness. There remains a gap between what is demonstrated and what is required, between that divine love which is majestic grace and the human love which is humble imitation.

Only on the last point have I differed with Barth. Other neo-orthodox theologians have varied so much from the more thorough solutions of Barth that we may have cause to wonder whether they all are really similar enough to be classed under the "neo-orthodoxy" heading. Perhaps, after all, it is a category theology can do without.

PART III

LIBERATION IN PROCESS

CONTEMPORARY OPTIONS FOR LOVE - TALK IN A WORLD OF INJUSTICE

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LOVE OF JUSTICE

Love and Justice in Latin American Theology of Liberation

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LOVE OF JUSTICE

LOVE AND JUSTICE IN LATIN AMERICAN THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION

Topical Survey

LOVE AND JUSTICE IN LATIN AMERICAN THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION

In the year that Karl Barth died, history appears to have been affected by many forces which theology cannot ignore, precisely because they have already begun to influence the character of theology itself. Among many other memorable events in the year 1968, the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops took place in Medellín, Colombia. The documents produced at Medellín are generally acknowledged to have given rise to the essentially Roman Catholic but profoundly ecumenical theological genre which has come from Latin America, known broadly as 'theology of liberation'.

As I have attempted to demonstrate in the previous chapter, there may be more than a coincidental link between Karl Barth and Medellin. Barth's unequivocal characterization of human righteousness as "a vindication of right in favour of the threatened innocent, the oppressed poor, widows, orphans and aliens" has been noticed by certain Latin American theologians.[1] They have generally adopted (or inadvertently agreed to) Barth's assertion that "God always takes his stand unconditionally and passionately...against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly; against those who already enjoy right and privilege and on behalf of those who are denied and deprived of it." As Barth further declared and Latin American theologians have certainly stressed, the matter does not rest in theological discourse, but extends to a "political tendency" and "a sense of responsibility in the direction indicated."[2] In correspondence with Barth's insistence that God's love is best characterized as action, Latin American theologians insist that human love, in its 'concrete' mode, must take the form of practice. It must be a

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1. Julio de Santa Ana and Jose Miguez Bonino, specifically. cf. Santa Ana, ed. Towards a Church of the Poor, Publication of the Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1979 (The quotation from Barth appears opposite the title-page.)
2. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1, p. 386, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1957

commitment to the poor and oppressed in the completely historical context of human misery and exploitation. Only such a love, they say, is consistent with the Gospel and authentically Christian.

The Medellín Conference set the tone for an indigenous Latin American theology which would combine diverse socio-economic concerns with a 'militant' theological framework. This theology stems from an increasing social consciousness to be descerned in various papal documents and other Catholic writings, both dogmatic and scriptural, which may be traced back to Pope Leo XIII and his 1891 encyclical Rerum Novarum.[1] The bishops at Medellin combined this growing tradition of social concern in Catholic thought with peculiar and acute situations in Latin America - so diverse that proposed solutions must be broadly flexible in order to be applicable, yet common enough to justify fairly radical statements directed to the plight of exploited masses in all their parishes. They affirmed that "misery, as a collective fact, expresses itself as injustice which cries to the heavens";[2] That international business interests were directly responsible for much of this misery; "lack of solidarity" between the various Latin American cultures had helped to support "the unjust structures which characterize the Latin American situation".[3] The bishops expressed a profound awareness that the economic and social welfare of their peoples depends upon "the affirmation of the necessity for structural change". Such a change, they declared, should be founded upon a concept of salvation which is "an action of integral human development and liberation, which has love for its sole motive."

> Man is "created in Christ Jesus", fashioned in him as a "new creature". By faith and baptism he is transformed, filled with the gift of the Spirit, with a new dynamism, not of selfishness, but of love which compels him to seek out a new, more profound relationship with God, his fellow man, and created things.

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1. Important also are Quadragesimo Anno (1931), Mater et Magistra (1961), Pacem in Terris (1963), Gaudium et Spes of Vatican II (1965), Populorum Progressio (1967), and Octogesima Adveniens (1971).
2. The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in Light of the Council, Vol. II, Conclusions, published by the Latin American Bureau of the United States Catholic Conference, 1970; compiled in Joseph Gremillion, The Gospel of Peace and Justice, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1975, p.445
3. ibid. p. 446

> Love, "the fundamental law of human perfection", and therefore of the transformation of the world is not only the greatest commandment of the Lord; it is also the dynamism which ought to motivate Christians to realize justice in the world, having truth as a foundation and liberty as their sign.[1]

Thus the Latin American bishops at Medellin began to assert what many theologians of liberation have since stressed: "The Christian quest for justice is a demand arising from biblical teaching...our love for Christ and our brethren will not only be the great force liberating us from injustice and oppression, but also the inspiration for social justice, understood as a whole of life and as an impulse toward the integral growth of other countries."[2]

It would be erroneous, however, to suggest that the Medellín Conference is the main stimulus or resource of the Latin American theologians. Although the conference provided a needed framework for a particularly 'practical' theology, the continuing background is the Latin American situation and all the influences upon it. In addition to the common Roman Catholic piety in which most of the continent is immersed, there is also the influence of Marxism and other social theories through which various solutions are offered. The confluence of Catholicism and Marxist thought has evoked some innovative thinking by some courageous churchmen, the impact of which upon the "Marxist-Christian dialogue" can hardly be overestimated. Ernesto Cardenal tells of the old Communist leader he met who confessed that he had not been a good Marxist. He had previously advocated that the revolution in South America could be achieved without Christians, but he had failed to take seriously the fact that the people on whom the revolution depended were indeed Christian. Then he realized that a revolution without Christians would have to be a revolution without the people, and so would be no revolution.[2]

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1. ibid, p. 447
2. Medellín Documents, Conclusions; Gremillion, The Gospel of Peace and Justice, op. cit. p.447
3. Ernesto Cardenal, preface to Hugo Assmann, Practical Theology of Liberation; trans. Paul Burns, Search Press, London, 1975

The idea of a revolution with Christians has truly been taken seriously by Cardenal and many of his colleagues. They stress that theology of liberation cannot be the task of professionals but rather of committed persons often living in the "solidarity of poverty" who use their theological reflection as tools for revolution. They are severely critical of affluent academics purporting to make universal and ontological pronouncements valid for all. The situation in Latin America, they claim, demands a Latin American focus, conceived in the experience of poverty and oppression, not held captive to traditional 'ideological' ways of thinking.

There is no denying that Latin American theology of liberation is a dynamic and innovative influence today, not only upon Latin America, but also upon European and North American theology. Whether it is quite as innovative as some of its adherents claim, remains to be seen. Cardenal, for example, asserts that it

> is not one more chapter of traditional theology invented recently in Latin America, as European theologians are accustomed to believe. Just as there is a theology of marriage, a theology of the Church, a theology of the priesthood, a theology of work, and so on, they suppose that the theology of liberation is one more appendix of traditional theology applied now to the theme of revolution. It is not so. This is an entirely new theology, one that replaces in the light of revolution all the topics of traditional theology: God, Christ, the Church, the priesthood, marriage, work: everything, in fact.[1]

Joseph Gremillion, from a different perspective, agrees that this theology is culturally innovative: "This is the first school of theological thought to arise outside western Europe since that of the Cappadocian and Eastern Church colleagues of 400-600 a.d."[2] Alfredo Fierro gives it credit for being "a theology that knows that it does not know", but at the same time he remarks that because of its awareness of non-knowing, it is to a certain extent a "negative theology". As such, he says, it threatens the role of scripture,

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1. Cardenal, prefact to Assmann, Practical Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 3
2. Gremillion, The Gospel of Peace and Justice, op. cit.; p. 135

sacraments, dogma, and ecclesiastical institutions.[1]

The Latin American theological themes we have to consider are, of course, not new. The themes of justice, love, the poor, the kingdom of God, even "utopia", we have met before. As we shall discover, many of these themes in Latin American thought may be traced to pre-Marxist European thought, not the least of which is that of Ludwig Feuerbach. Because of this we shall have to retain a certain scepticism about the assertion of novelty. But on the other hand, the practical correlation of these themes with a specific cultural development, and the confluence of a radical interpretation of Christianity with social theories which have not previously had much to do with Christianity and the Church, certainly bear watching. For the purposes of our 'thesis', that the love commanded by Christ is a love which creates justice in this world, the theology of liberation certainly deserves our attention.

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1. Alfredo Fierro, The Militant Gospel, SCM Press, London, 1977; p. 354

Section I. Theological Foundations for a Liberative Love

In order to adequately characterize and document the prevalent doctine of God in Latin American liberation theology, a much greater space would be demanded than lies at our disposal. Despite many important criticisms and reinterpretations of traditional Catholic doctrine, the Latin American God continues to be conceived according to many pervasive suppositions common among Catholics, yet not necessarily common among Protestants. For example, much of the inherent critique of worship within the literature is directed primarily at Catholic forms of worship and the sacraments as interpreted in the Roman Catholic tradition. Similarly, the idea of grace as it is reinterpreted by Latin American liberation theologians stems from and continues to be a particularly Roman Catholic view of grace.[1] In certain cases the difference between Protestant and Catholic traditions, and the fact that the liberation theologians generally stem from the latter, may make valid criticism and assessment of their work by Protestants difficult. It would be unfair and redundant, for example, for a Protestant to suggest too quickly that the liberation theologians have an improper view of God, grace, the Bible, faith, justification, or any of the other themes which tend to be interpreted in the light of the Reformation. An assessment and critique of Latin American liberation theology, to sustain validity, must come from a deep sympathy for, if not necessarily an alliance with, both the Catholic traditions from which the theological arguments arise, and the Latin American social climate in which they take place.

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1. The implications of this difference may be very important for the understanding and interpretation of the idea of love in Christian theology. Nevertheless, the topic is too wide to consider here, except at brief points. For further discussion of the Latin American/Catholic view of grace in the context of liberation themes, cf. Juan Luis Segundo, Grace and the Human Condition, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York 1973, and Leonardo Boff, Liberating Grace, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1976

Although we must make certain distinctions along the way, there is much in common, indeed a certain solidarity of theme and purpose, among the various authors. The selection here is limited to those which have had works translated into English. Certainly it does not pretend to be exhaustive even of those.[1] Although there is always the hazard of over-generalization, it is my intention to offer a general characterization interrelating the several themes of liberation theology most closely allied with the concept of love.[2]

1. The God of Liberative Love

Sharply critical of European and North American theologies which propose to discover the ontological character of God, the Latin American theologians have stressed an image of the deity which is completely aligned with marginated, poor, oppressed, and suffering peoples of the world. Their God is not to be discovered through doctrinal assertion but rather through historical analysis and the activity of humans with and on behalf of all people who find themselves victims of other people's greed and exploitation. Very briefly, we may characterize, but certainly not define, this concept of God by means of the dynamic and requisitely flexible headings:
(1) God's salvific action; (2) God's justice; (3) God's wrath; and (4) God's love.

(1) God's Salvific Action

Throughout the writings of the Latin Americans there is the repeated declaration that salvation and history cannot be separated. "History is one"; Heilsgeschichte cannot be conceived or understood apart from human history. The Old Testament relates not only the religious history of the Hebrew people, but also God's action with

1. It must be noted that not all of these theologians are Catholic. Santa Ana and Bonino, for example, are Methodist. The considerable agreement between such Protestants and the Catholics may do much to forward ecumenical dialogue.
2. Due to the necessity for inter-relation of these themes, it will be impossible to avoid a certain amount of repetition.

them in their struggle to escape the domination of others. The New Testament is generally understood as a continuation of this same liberative tendency of the Old Testament God, broadening and universalizing the salvific purpose of God to include many different kinds of salvation. For the Latin American theologians, salvation and liberation are understood to be one consolidated and universal activity of God, which does not take place as action 'from above', but rather through the intensely human and often frustrated processes of history. As Ignacio Ellacuria suggests,

> On the one hand liberation in history signifies and realizes God's salvific promise to human beings. On the other hand, God's promise of salvation to humankind impels human beings to liberation in history so that God's salvation may be made truly present on an ever new and higher plane. Thus there is constant interaction between the operative promise of God the Savior and the carrying out of this salvation in history. God shows his saving power in history and in history the effectiveness of this divine promise is signified and made real.[1]

The impact of such a statement does imply that God's capacity to liberate and save may be linked to whatever partial and necessarily inadequate forces are at work in history at any given moment. This, however, does not seem to be a theological impediment to most theologians of liberation.

Juan Luis Segundo sees the partiality of historical liberation as more of an opportunity than a problem. "Our theory assumes that there is an empty space between the conception of God that we receive from our faith and the problems that come to us from an ever-changing history. So we must build a bridge between our conception of God and the real-life problems of history." Gustavo Gutierrez agrees that liberation should be the combined activity of human beings working together with God. He has criticized the tendency of

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1. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, trans. John Drury, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York 1976; p. 104
2. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, trans. John Drury, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1976; p. 116

theologians to omit "the liberating and protagonistic role of man" in God's work of creation and redemption.[1] Gutierrez has stressed that liberation is part of the divine salvation wherever or by whomever it is achieved. For Christian or non-Christian to participate in the process of liberation is "already a salvific work".[2] Obviously, for these theologians, salvation is not necessarily a function of faith. On the contrary, salvation is quite literally equated with the continuous process of human liberation in history from every kind of alienating oppression. Creation, salvation, and liberation of human beings are components of the universal action of God in human history, with human beings; for, "The God who makes the cosmos from chaos is the same God who leads Israel from alienation to liberation."[3]

(2) God's Justice

Ellacuria quotes a statement issued by a 1971 bishops' synod in Latin America which gives representative expression to the justice of God as interpreted by the liberation theologians: "In the Old Testament God reveals himself to us as liberator of the oppressed and defender of the poor, demanding from man faith in him and justice toward man's neighbour."[4] Ellacuria goes on to say that

> It is an essential dictum of the Christian message that God's justice must operate in and through the hearts of men so that each individual may be the liberator of his fellow human beings and nature itself. But the justice of God cannot remain isolated in the heart of the individual. For man's heart is structured by the things and realities of history. The fact is that today one portion of humanity not only oppresses the rest of humanity but also is itself enslaved to nature. This gives new urgency and poignancy to Paul's statement that mankind and nature are groaning in the pangs of childbirth as they wait for liberation from the injustice that prevents them from being what they are truly meant to be.[5]

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1. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, trans. and edited by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson; Orbis, Maryknoll, New York 1973; p. 173
2. ibid. p. 72
3. ibid. p. 158
4. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 96
5. ibid. p. 117

Again we notice that in Latin American theology, an attribute of God is reinterpreted as a correlated responsibility of humanity. Just as God's salvific action takes place in history and through humanity, God's justice is conceived as directly associated with the human capacity to act justly. Although Protestants might quickly complain that this intimacy of divine and human justice limits God, the South Americans seem to be saying that it offers an opportunity to humanity to take part in God's plan of salvation.[1]

Jon Sobrino has declared that this relationship raises no problem for theodicy. The problem is not to justify God, but rather to correlate human justice with the divine justice.[2] God's consistent activity in history shows him to be a God who is for the orphans, the widows, the poor, and all the enslaved and alienated people. God has already taken his stand; the problem is for humans to take theirs on the same side.

Jose P. Miranda has attempted to show, in some innovative exegesis, that Paul's reference to "the glory of God" is tacitly equivalent to "the justice of God". "Romans 3:23 and the entire Old Testament oblige us to conceive of the glory of God as a comprehensive, supra-individual reality which comes into human history and establishes itself there, constituting in it a new age, a universal reign of goodness and justice...This glory consists in a life of justice and goodness and compassion and love of neighbour which for the world is completely new." From Miranda's comprehensive notion of God's justice, we may conclude that it is not only a dynamic force which operates through human justice, but it is also an eschatological vector which cannot be ultimately frustrated. For the

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1. For an excellent appreciation of the social implications of this salvation, cf. Mater et Magistra of Pope John XXIII, Part II, 51-120; in Gremillion, the Gospel of Peace and Justice, op. cit. pp. 154 ff.
2. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, trans. John Drury, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1978; SCM London, 1978 p. 36
3. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1974; SCM 1977, p. 239

liberation theologians there is never an understanding of God's justice as sheer law, or 'order', but it is always a positive and shaping factor which is allied with hope, love, and a better world.

(3) God's Wrath

Any reference to the wrath of God in Christian theology should probably begin with the epistle of Paul to the Church at Rome: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth" (Rom. 1:18). According to the common interpretation among the liberation authors, the "ungodliness and wickedness" is a reference to a refusal to imitate God's justice on earth (Rom. 1:29), and God's wrath is especially revealed against hypocrisy (Rom. 2:1-5). Paul's strict criticism of legalist hypocrisy ("While you preach against stealing, do you steal?" Rom. 2:21) has a special translation for Latin American exploitation by more affluent, developed, and educated countries. The result is that unlike the liberal theology popular at the turn of the century (with which Latin American theology of liberation is occasionally compared) it is not possible to accuse the liberationists of failing to consider the weight and nature of sin.[1]

Sharing a common emphasis of the neo-orthodox theologians, the liberation theologians tend to remove the concept of sin from a relation of piety between human individuals and God. The problem of sin is seen as more structural than personal, although the personal element is certainly not removed. "Sin has become a very private affair," says Enrique Dussel. "But the great historic and communitarian sins of human kind pass unnoticed by all."[2] Although all of the Latin American liberationists stress the aspect of institutional

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1. The dominant Latin American view of sin is that of a victim of it. Whether this view is adequate to exhaust the topic cannot be explored here.
2. Enrique Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, trans. Bernard F. McWilliams, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1978; p. 27

sin, Dussel takes the idea far indeed: "The subjugation of person by person is the only sin a person can commit."[1] Gutierrez agrees that, in general, sin may be equated with oppression.[2] The impact of such sin has a rebounding effect because, as Dussel illustrates, the exploited worker who beats his wife is suffering not only from his own sin but also from the frustration caused by the sin of others. This looks a bit like an escape-clause for the violence of the workers, but it does have a credible philosophical rationale. Dussel quotes Rousseau in affirming that "man is born neither good nor bad but institutions make him bad." "When we are unjust," he says, "it is precisely because we are caught up in the system determined in history by the princes of this world."[3]

Although such a statement may jeopardize human freedom and our conviction that love is able to overcome deterministic forces, it seems that we must give Dussel credit for stating much of the truth. He shares my conviction (expressed above) that the Cain and Abel myth is the primary symbol of human sin. He goes even further to suggest that God himself is symbolized in Abel, and fratricide is literally to be construed as theocide.[4] Today this theocide is often expressed in the slow but no less fatal "original sin" of colonial domination and economic imperialism, and "all the others in the system spring from it." In such exploitation, says Dussel, "the devil is present in real history." Despite what even some liberation theologians might consider a tendency to reductionist aphorisms, Dussel's interpretation of the kind of sin against which the wrath of God is revealed is typical.

The Latin Americans generally agree that God is not directly

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1. ibid. p. 10
2. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 109
3. Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 26
4. ibid. p. 18

offendable. Ellacuria says one cannot offend God directly just as one cannot know God directly.[1] But God is offended, and sin takes place, whenever an injustice is done, for "sin is the formal exercise of an act of radical injustice."[2] Human injustice tends to blot out the justice of God among human beings, since God's justice is allied with human justice. For this reason, human injustice is the sin which "negates God", a literal "denial of the first commandment."[3] For the liberationists sin is both a denial of God and a denial of humanity insofar as it takes the form of oppression; indeed, most of them agree that God may only be offended to the extent that humans are oppressed.

The acknowledgement of structural sin as the foremost offence against God has led the liberationists to question seriously whether traditional forms of worship are appropriate. Segundo, for example, adopts, to a certain extent, the militancy of North American Black Theology. James Cone remarks that while white churchmen sang "Jesus Lover of My Soul" black people continued to be enslaved in the early days of North American church development. Cone's point is that white spiritualism is certainly no guarantee against the exploitation of poor people. "Black theology then asks not whether love is an essential element of the Christian interpretation of God, but whether the love of God itself can be properly understood without focussing equally on the biblical view of God's righteousness. Is it possible to understand what God's love means for the oppressed without making wrath an essential ingredient of that love?" Cone concludes, and Segundo agrees, that "the wrath of God is the love of God in regard to the forces against his liberation of the oppressed."[4]

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1. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 105 (Knowledge of God is "mediated through history".)
2. ibid.
3. ibid. p. 112
4. James H. Cone, A Black Theology of Liberation, Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1979; pp. 130, 133; quoted in Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. pp. 28-29

Although there seems to be general agreement among the liberation theologians that God's wrath against oppressors is a function of his love for the poor, there is no definite agreement as to what form God's wrath must take in history. Whether human vengeance can be the Lord's vengeance remains to be seen. But the God of liberative love does not stand idly by while human beings suffer. He is active in history, liberationists declare, and his active love may take form as his wrath against the sin of oppression.

(4) God's Love

In line with the 'chronology' of this development of the liberationists' concept of God, God's love (perhaps too often) appears to be preceded by God's wrath. Only by the insight of Cone, that God's love often takes the form of wrath against injustice, do we really get an introduction to the notion of God's love in the theology of liberation. The general stress in the literature is upon human love, human justice, and human practice. Many of the authors frankly admit that these things are prior to theological understanding of their source and character. Gutierrez, for example, says that theology must be "the second step" following a genuine commitment to the liberation of oppressed people.[1]

In criticism of the historical abuse of Christian piety and spiritualism, many of the authors are justifiably suspicious of the ambiguous term, 'the love of God'. Both God's love for humanity and human love for God have too often been the "opiate" of oppressed people and the ideological pacifiers used by oppressors. When the liberation authors speak of the love of God, the idea is always qualified in terms of human love. The implicit anthropology which thereby informs their theology reminds us very often of Ludwig Feuerbach, Schleiermacher, and occasionally Kant and Hegel. This

1. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 11

anthropological basis for the idea of God's love (and the anthropocentric philosophy which informs it) is not at all surprising when we realize that most of the liberationists are quite well-versed in the thought of Karl Marx. Despite the professed atheism of Feuerbach and Marx, the notion of God's love expressed as wrath is somewhat appropriate to both. Dussel, for example, asserts that Marx was atheistic toward the God of German ideology, not necessarily toward the liberating God of Jesus.[1] Miranda underscores the same point by stressing the link between Marx and the Old Testament prophets. As Gutierrez observes, Feuerbach's critique of religion was based upon his apprehension of human love.[2] For Gutierrez, human love itself is divine, and is thereby opposed to hypostatized faith. Like Feuerbach, his "God of love" is militant against the religion of oppressive piety.

The love of God (i.e. God's love) receives comprehensive attention in very few of the liberation writings. God's love is primarily defined as that love which is at work in humans to create greater justice in the world, and as such it operates, essentially, through human beings. Nevertheless, the historical love of humans acting to create justice is indeed linked, retroactively in most cases, with the creative and liberating love of God. The 'retroactive' method appears to consist of looking first at what liberative love is like in human beings, then discovering that love in theological sources. Although this description may seem reductive, it is exactly correlated with Segundo's practical hermeneutic, which begins first with human experience, and then interprets the Bible, suspicious of its ideology, in light of that experience.[3] While not all of the liberation theologians consciously adopt Segundo's "hermeneutic

1. Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 16
2. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 219 (cf. above, Chapter 1)
3. cf. Juan Luis Segundo. The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 9 ff.

circle", almost all of them do seem to incorporate this method in their approach to theology. Experience and "praxis" come first; theology follows. Anthropology precedes theology.

By means of a general synthesis of the liberation authors we may sketch their interpretation of God's love in the following description. God's love is his covenanted identification with, and action with and on behalf of the poor. The covenant stems from the divine proclamation of Exodus 29:45, God's promise to dwell with his people.[1] Through the incarnation of Christ, the covenant extends to all. God's love is universal: he loves all equally, but in order to love all equally, he sides with the poor, and literally dwells among them. From his position on the side of the poor God summons all to do justice to them, and thereby demonstrate their love for him. God does not dwell among those who perpetuate injustice to the poor; as Miranda and Gutierrez attest, God is absent when justice is not done, and worship of God by the rich may be superfluous.[2] God's love takes form in history as a salvific liberation which is an extension of his creation.

There is historical and eschatological character in God's love as it takes form through all the processes of history. Because it operates through human beings, it is capable of suffering and frustration. But because it is God's love which takes human form wherever people opt for justice and liberation, it has a transcendent character which is able to overcome history's frustration. As Miranda repeatedly reminds us, the love of God defined by Paul is the love with which God loves humanity, which has been poured into our hearts, and "precisely for this reason we have a hope that cannot fail". (Romans 5:5; Galations 5:22)[3] Miranda takes the eschatological

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1. cf. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 190
2. ibid. p. 195; cf. also: Miranda, p. 65 (op. cit.); Segundo, p. 47 (op. cit.)
3. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 230

character of the love of God which works through human beings farther than most of the liberation theologians, but the same hopefulness is characteristic of them all. Because God's love is creative and dedicated to justice, and because he has (according to Rom. 5:5) instilled this love in humanity, then the hope for the kingdom of God rests upon the effective love of God at work through human love. "It is the working of love in the world which makes us have certain hope for the achievement of justice on earth."[1]

Despite this optimism, the Latin American theologians are under no illusions that the love of God expressed in history, for the poor and from their side, can avoid conflict. As Gutierrez tells us, "The proclamation of a God who loves all men equally must be given substance in history and must become history. To proclaim that love...will make this process of 'becoming history' a conflict-laden experience."[2] Most of the liberation authors find some degree of violence inevitable as God's love sides with the poor against those who perpetuate injustice against them. God's love is not to be associated with an easy peace nor one of mere conciliation. As the bishops at Medellín affirmed, "Peace is a work of justice." It requires the establishment of a just order, and authentic peace requires a struggle. Yet, despite this inherent conflict as peace is "not found but built", peace is still "the fruit of love." And love, said the bishops - God's love at work through the just loves of humanity - is "the soul of justice."[3]

2. Old Testament Themes

The liberation themes in the Old Testament have been a constant source of inspiration for liberation movements. The North American

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1. ibid. p. 245
2. Gutierrez, foreword to Hugo Assmann, Pratical Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 19
3. Medellín Documents, in Gremillion, The Gospel of Peace and Justice, op. cit. p. 459

civil rights movement of the fifties and sixties took up the emphasis upon the Hebrew's delivery from Egyptian bondage, an emphasis which had been common in the black churches since the eighteenth century.[1] More recently, however, there has been a shift away from the spiritual emphasis upon what God did for the Hebrew people, to what he leads them to do for themselves with his support. James Cone, for example, has stressed that there are limits to the identification of the Hebrews with the oppressed peoples of today. "Black people," he says, "are not elected to be Yahweh's suffering people."[2] An innovative approach to Old Testament exegesis combined with an increasing political militancy and ideological suspicion of traditional interpretations has led to a rich elaboration and application of Old Testament emancipation motifs, by both North and South American liberation theologians.

Segundo is most adamant that the exodus event cannot be the central theme of liberation theology.[3] By the time of Jesus it had become a theological institution undergirding both a false favouritism on the part of God for the children of Abraham and a misguided notion that the oppressed must wait for God to deliver them. Gutierrez notes the reluctance of the Hebrews to be liberated, preferring to remain in the relative security of Egypt and Babylon, than to take the risks associated with striking out into the wilderness.[4] The Latin American theologians seem to find less subtle ideology in the prophets. Yet the observation of Ellacuria, that in the Psalms there is the repeated equation of liberation with salvation,[5] and Gutirrez' correlation of creation with the political liberation of Israel,[6] show the wide use that may be made of Old Testament literature.

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1. One must be careful not to draw too many parallels between North and South American liberation movements, but it is probably safe to suggest that Martin Luther King and the Southern christian Leadership Conference have been a positive inspiration to numerous liberation movements, including that in Latin America.
2. James Cone, A Black Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 108
3. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 112
4. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 156
5. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 100
6. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. pp. 154-155

Julio de Santa Ana tells us of the prophet Zephaniah's insistence that "only the meek are able to wait faithfully for the sign of the saving justice of God," while the rich and the proud are incapable of recognizing God's saving action when it comes (Zeph.2:3). For Santa Ana "the poor of Yahweh" are the "friends of God" who are themselves "faced with the scandal of poverty while ready to act against it."[1] To these faithful poor Jesus announces his Beatitudes, a continuation of God's alliance with them.

In the thought of the Latin Americans there is the repeated declaration that the prophetic view of religion is inseparable from social justice. As Gutierrez asserts, the prophets "saw in injustice not a social disorder or an offence to the poor, but a violation of the divine law and an insult to the holiness of God."[2] This observation seems closely allied with the prophetic nature of Jesus' commandment to love the neighbour as oneself. Jose P. Miranda makes the point, too often missed by enquiries into the nature of the command, that Jesus is quoting directly from the "holiness code" of Leviticus 19. As Miranda attests, the commandment to love the neighbour is "a synthesis of prohibitions which concern rigorous justice" (cf. Lev. 19:18).[3] Miranda asserts: to love God, the first commandment, is a just love for the neighbour.

Miranda elaborates at length on the point made by Gutierrez: "To know Yahweh, which in biblical language is equivalent to saying 'to love Yahweh', is to establish just relationships among men, it is to recognize the rights of the poor. The God of biblical revelation is known through interhuman justice. When justice does not exist, God is not known; he is absent."[4] Miranda combines numerous Old Testament texts to show that God is accessible only

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1. Julio de Santa Ana, Good News to the Poor, op. cit. pp. 8-9
2. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 170
3. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 63
4. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 195

in the act of justice. "The God who does not allow himself to be objectified...clearly specifies that he is knowable exclusively in the cry of the poor and the weak who seek justice."[1] Miranda's argument rests upon the repeated prophetic link between cultic worship and the achievement of justice (e.g. Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14; Jer. 22:15; Hosea 6:6). "The dilemma between justice and cultus occurs because while there is injustice among a people, worship and prayer do not have Yahweh as their object, even though we have the formal and sincere 'intention' of addressing ourselves to the true God. To know Yahweh is to do justice and compassion and right to the needy."[2]

The word 'compassion' (hesed) occurs in the Old Testament beside or in the context of 'justice' (Mispat, sedakah) at least nineteen times, Miranda tells us (cf. Micah 6:8)"...this is a compassion strictly related to a sense of justice." It does not represent a vertical love for God, but rather a sense of justice toward humanity. Miranda believes that Matthew 9:13 and 12:7 retain this justice ingredient as Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy (eleos) and not sacrifice."[3]

Miranda's exegesis cannot be unreservedly accepted, for his interpretation of 'knowing God' is not always supported by the Old Testament. For example, in Psalm 76 ("In Judah God is known..."), it is evident that the determination of the Hebrews' knowledge depends not upon what they do, but rather upon what God himself does. Although we may admire the passion with which Miranda equates knowledge of God with interhuman justice, a more conservative view is probably that of the Hebrew prophets, and also of Jesus. My own view is that knowledge of God is demonstrated by a sense of justice, but the two things may not be logically the same.

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1. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 48
2. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 56
3. ibid. pp. 46-47

We must also be cautious in adopting the view that God is absent where justice is not done. Although it may be that our worship is often directed to an improper image of God (certainly if we believe that God supports our own injustices), the love of God disclosed in the New Testament, and founded in the covenant of the Old, is effective and 'present' wherever there is sin, and while we are yet sinners. There seems to be a discontinuity between Miranda's essential hopefulness and his conviction that God cannot be present where justice is not done. The 'love which is poured into human hearts' must not be eclipsed by injustice in the world if it is really to fashion the kingdom of God in history, as Miranda hopes. Miranda's legitimate concern for authentic worship in a context of justice seems to militate against his assurance that the kingdom is coming. I do not think one can declare God's absence from all situations of injustice while at the same time affirming God's work through human love in establishing the kingdom. Human love seems always in contention with some injustice or other, particularly including one's own inadvertent injustices as well as the injustice of structures and other human beings. If God's love is to be as intimately allied with the loves of humans as Miranda suggests, one must hope that those glimmers of human love which occur even in the midst of gross injustice might be affirmed by God, and in some way disclose God's presence. This is not to overlook, however, the numerous occasions in the Old Testament where God seems to have absented himself from the Hebrew people, ostensibly due to their injustice. The Cross, of the new covenant, reveals God's promise to be both present and active among his people, despite their sin (Rom. 8:31-38).

3. Christology

The Latin American view of Christology is characterized by an emphasis upon the historical Jesus, and a corresponding emphasis upon a 'Christ of faith' who is embodied in the liberative action

of human beings in the changing situations of history itself. "To hope in Christ," says Gutierrez, "is at the same time to believe in the adventure of history, which opens infinite vistas to the love and action of the Christian."[1] The work of Christ which began in Galilee is seen to be a continuous salvific and liberative energy which touches the social order, not merely "tangentially", but "in its roots and basic structure".[2] As such it is the continued creative and liberative action of God directed toward the total transformation of the cosmos. Christ "opens new perspectives by catapulting history forward...towards total reconciliation."[3] In Christ and through him salvation is present at the very heart of human history, and "there is no human act which, in the last instance, is not defined in terms of it."[4]

The Latin American liberation authors have generally demonstrated a conviction that there is sufficient evidence in the New Testament to develop a valid conception of the historical Jesus. Jon Sobrino of El Salvador and Leonardo Boff of Brazil have published Christologies which rest upon an optimistic view of the biblical evidence. Sobrino asserts that liberation theology has made a reclamation of "Jesus' own history" as the foundation for Christology. In the background of this reclamation is the tendency in Roman Catholic thought to base Christology on traditional doctrinal formulae. Sobrino's criticism of this approach suggests that those who hold economic and political power "do not want to see" Jesus' essential relationship to the poor and the radical implications of the kingdom of God. "They would prefer to maintain the seemingly orthodox affirmation of Christ's absoluteness so that the supposed absoluteness of the prevailing capitalist system might not be called in question."[5]

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1. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. pp. 238-239
2. ibid. p. 177
3. ibid. p. 167
4. ibid. p. 177
5. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, trans. John Drury, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York 1978; SCM, London, 1978; p. xix

For Sobrino, as well as for Gultierrez, Boff, and Ellacuria, the 'Christ of faith' cannot be conceived apart from a reinterpretation and re-examination of the historical Jesus. [1]

The picture of the historical Jesus as it is sketched by the liberationists illustrates Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God imminent to and immanent among the poor. It describes Jesus' political awareness of the historical forces which appear to impede the kingdom, and his radical statements which alienate and provoke the rich and powerful of his day. The liberation Christology discloses a Jesus who realizes that the coming kingdom is intimately associated with his own person, who is tempted to use divine power but courageously opts for the 'impotence' of love in alliance with the powerless and in faithful continuity with his dependence upon God. He calls his disciples to follow him in a faith that works through love and in a love which conquers evil through suffering. He is not a man of violence, but he realizes that following him may provoke violence and necessitate many forms of conflict.[2]

Sobrino claims, and the other liberationists often confirm, that we can only come to know the historical Jesus in and through the notion of God's kingdom.[3] Jesus' radical reference to God as "Abba" (father) means that he intends to create a family of brothers and sisters on earth. As evidence of the approaching kingdom, Jesus forgives the sins of the poor and the outcasts, those who according to the law are unclean. Jesus' miracles are to be understood in the context of the liberation which is at hand.[4] Sobrino stresses that the phenomenon of human sin against one's neighbour is essential=

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1. For Segundo, the reinterpretation must take place in the light of the ideology prevalent among the New Testament authors, and also in the light of Jesus' own ideological approach to the crises of his day. cf. Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 116,162, inter alia.
2. Segundo, however, interprets violence in such a way that Jesus' sayings themselves incorporate subtle forms of violence. Most of the liberationists, however, confirm that "Jesus was not a Zealot", i.e. "did not actually kill," cf. Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. pp. 155 ff.
3. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit., p. 41
4. ibid. p. 48

ly a sin against the kingdom, not against God directly. Because sin impedes the kingdom, Jesus is determined that it must not only be forgiven but also removed.[1] In his effort to remove sin, "Jesus' most fundamental gesture is taking sides with human beings in a concrete situation where the existing politico-religious structure has dehumanized people."[2] Since Jesus' mission is a priestly one, Sobrino asserts that the old cult and priesthood are abolished. "They are to be replaced by the real, historical, and secular love of Jesus."[3] (Sobrino means Jesus' love for humans, and not particularly human love for Jesus.) Sobrino characterizes the implicit ethics in this historical love as "a note of urgency and a note of gratuitousness."[4] The "urgency" arises from the imminence of the kingdom, and the "gratuitousness" refers to God's grace which makes the kingdom possible. Jesus' own love lived out in history becomes the literal impetus for human love in history, for "the love of Christ impels us" (2 Cor. 5:14), Sobrino declares, as "individuals become Christians through their efforts to fashion the kingdom into a reality."[5]

Sobrino argues that Jesus' ministry may be divided into two stages representing essential developments in Jesus' faith. The two stages have implicit bearing upon his interpretation of authentic historical love. Sobrino sees the Galilean crisis (Mk. 8; Matt. 13; John 6) as a high-water mark in Jesus' self-consciousness. In the early stages of his ministry, Jesus' call was to repentance and obedience, which, if accepted and executed by his hearers, would "let God be God" in bringing about the kingdom. But, says Sobrino, Jesus' rejection in Galilee leads him to the realization that

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1. ibid. pp. 51-53
2. ibid. p. 92
3. ibid. p. 90
4. ibid. p. 111
5. ibid. p. 114

> letting God remain God now lacks any verification; it is done in the absence of any verification at all.
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> Insofar as the kingdom of God is concerned, Jesus no longer sees its imminent arrival. He also realizes that people have rejected it as an ideal. His work in favor of the kingdom no longer means placing all that he has at its disposal but rather placing all that he himself is at its disposal. He must surrender his ideas and his person, accepting death. The power which he displayed at the start of his public life, and which was concretely embodied in his miracles, has now proved to be ineffective. All that is left is the power of love in suffering.[1]

From this two-stage faith and ministry of Jesus, Sobrino draws the conclusion that an authentic love following Jesus is first, a love which is characterized by action stemming from an optimistic faith in God's liberative purpose. This correlates with Jesus' ministry in Galilee and its environs, proclaiming good news to the poor, repentance, and obedience in the light of the imminent kingdom. In this stage, "Jesus does all he can to concretize and make present real love as the quintessence of the kingdom."[2] But, says Sobrino, "Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane does not presuppose the same conception of God that Jesus had at the start of his life...Jesus sees his death as the death of his cause."[3] "That faith should mean total self-surrender and that liberative love should mean a love fraught with suffering is entirely new to Jesus."[4] Thus, according to Sobrino, Jesus demonstrates two forms of love. While the first is embodied in "effective action", the second is embodied in suffering. Sobrino's conclusion is that although these two forms of love may be present at the same time, "openness to love as action and to love as suffering is a historical constant in any morality based on Jesus."[5]

In drawing out wider practical and theological implications from this view of Jesus' love, Sobrino suggests that "Jesus' faith has been mediated historically through the history of his praxis in the midst of a conflict-ridden situation."[6] "His universal love

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1. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 94
2. ibid. p. 92
3. ibid. p. 94
4. ibid. p. 99
5. ibid. p. 137
6. ibid. p. 95

was translated into a decision to be 'with' the oppressed and to be 'against' the oppressors, precisely so that his love could be 'for' all of them."[1] The justice which we see in Jesus "entails not only proclaiming and doing it, but also fighting against injustice," not merely "doing good and avoiding evil", but "doing good and fighting evil to wipe it out."[2] The radical nature of his ministry suggests that for Jesus, "the ultimate experience of meaningfulness lies in love."[3] Christ's commandment to love the neighbour as oneself is compared "as the same thing (like it)" to the commandment to love God. Indeed, Sobrino suggests, the command to love the neighbour may have been originally the greatest in the earliest forms of the Markan gospel.[4] At any event, according to the commandment, "the love of God" is translated as "material love for human beings."[5]

For Sobrino (who follows Jürgen Moltmann closely on many points), the combined power of love as action and love as suffering is ultimately revealed on the Cross. "The Cross of Christ implies a new and revolutionary concept of God on both the theoretical and practical level."[6] Sobrino insists that the idea of redemption has been overstressed to the point that the historical power of love as action, sorrow and suffering have often been overlooked. The soteriological importance of the Cross is primarily concerned with the announcement of a God of love rather than of condemnation, and of the transcendent character of historical love (epitomized in the life of Jesus) which is able to overcome evil with suffering. Such power in suffering love, says Sobrino, cannot, be sufficiently stressed by concentrating on the resurrection. In the Cross, God's transcendence over history

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1. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 125
2. ibid.
3. ibid. p. 165
4. ibid. p. 169-170 (Sobrino credits M.E. Boismard with this observation, p. 178)
5. ibid. p. 172 Note the explicit Feuerbachian anthropology here, and also re "suffering" (cf. p. 199)
6. ibid. p. 179; cf. Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God, Harper & Row, New York, SCM, 1974

is reformulated in the categories of power, suffering and love. The whole concept of power is redefined. The power of the Cross discloses a passible God within history, for "God cannot describe himself as love if historical suffering does not affect him...if God were incapable of suffering, then he would be incapable of loving."[1] Through the Cross, Sobrino attests, "the definition of God as love receives its ultimate concretion."[2] Although the Cross is the contradiction of humanity because of the emphasis it places upon human suffering, it is ultimately grounded on solidarity with humanity, because it shows this suffering to be a form of power over evil. Its vindication inheres in the shared suffering throughout humankind, shared also by God himself. For Sobrino, the power at the resurrection discloses the power in the shared experience of suffering, and in the divine compassion engendered in one suffering person who recognizes it in another. "Without the resurrection love would not be authentic power; without the Cross, this power would not be love."[3]

Sobrino succinctly states the view of grace which arises in Latin American theology of liberation, stemming, as we have noted, from Catholic tradition. "Grace," he says, "is a way of life."[4] Partly, perhaps, because this idea of grace is cohesive with the whole range of Catholic teaching on the subject, and partly because his view of the historically operative Christ of faith demands it, grace is not essentially a redemptive or extra-historical 'rescue operation' from 'above and beyond'. Rather, grace is conceived as God's enabling of human beings within history to transform their world, and to participate in his teleological and eschatological activity which, after all, is not confined to history.

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1. ibid. p. 197
2. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 225
3. ibid. p. 261
4. ibid. p. 263

> The classical concepts of divinity, omnipotence, and justice are fleshed out concretely in a surprising way when Jesus appears. In him they are presented as grace and love. God does not display his omnipotence by conquering the negative reality of the world from outside. Instead he does so by immersing himself wholly within it and thereby displaying the power of love.[1]

Through the practice and experience of following Jesus, Sobrino proposes that we move from a love which is merely passive to one that is authentically active in history, directed toward our neighbour, and not initially toward God; that our love be active to the greatest possible extent in the situation we live in, finally knowing that when we fail and are frustrated, there still is hope; for precisely in the suffering of our love is the latent power which continues to transform the earth.

My critique of Sobrino's Christology must be abbreviated here. (Some general constructive remarks affecting all the liberationists may be relegated to the end of this chapter.) Sobrino's work is in fact an integration of numerous points of view, both European and Latin American. He admits substantial dependence upon Moltmann, and also echoes the views of Karl Rahner at many points. But his true hermeneutic hails from the Latin American context, complete with the pervasive emphasis upon the kingdom of God, historical practice, an anthropocentric theology, ecumenical appeal, and an underlying Roman Catholic set of suppositions (Sobrino is a Jesuit).

Since most of his Christological interpretation seems to derive from his exegesis of the Gospels to show a two-stage development in Jesus' faith, criticism of Sobrino should probably be more concerned with whether the New Testament can supply this kind of information, than with the recurrent themes of practice, love, justice, worship, and grace which are not particularly Sobrino's own, although they may differ from the conceptions of many Protestants. Exegetically, Sobrino's case is weak, because (1) it is an ambitious attempt to

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1. ibid. p. 276

derive a psychological picture of Jesus based upon material which is certainly not first-hand evidence; (2) there may be other reasons for the so-called "Galilean crisis" than those Sobrino has suggested (he implies Schweitzer's suggestion of popular rejection of the early kerygma and disloyalty among disciples); (3) too much of the interpretation rests solely upon the Gospel of Mark (adapted by the other evangelists), whose purpose in suggesting the crisis (and the "messianic secret") is not totally transparent. (Quite possibly Mark represents an attempt of the early Church to partially explain the delay of the kingdom.)

Sobrino's overall interpretation seems to be allied with the identification of Jesus' two-stage ministry by Albert Schweitzer.[1] But Sobrino's Jesus, perhaps fortunately, is not Schweitzer's. Indeed, it bears many of the marks of passionate and subjective interpretation that Schweitzer was forced to criticize. Perhaps, as Sobrino and the other Latin American theologians might agree, the only authentic Christology is one which is moulded in the light and with the tools of one's own history. If so, exegesis which pretends to be objective may be an insult to the Jesus of history, as well as to the Christ of faith.

4. Christology and Anthropology

Leonardo Boff, the author of the seminal Christological work Jesus Christ Liberator, has outlined the priorities of a Christology particularly relevant to Latin America. "It is with preoccupations that are ours alone," he says, "taken from our Latin American context, that we will reread not only the old texts of the New Testament but also the most recent commentaries written in Europe...Our sky possesses different stars that form different figures of the zodiac by which we orient ourselves in the adventures of faith and of life."[2]

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1. Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, A & C Black, London, 1954 (3rd edition) p. 386 f.
2. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, trans. Patrick Hughes, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1978 (first published Petropolis, Brazil, 1972) p. 43

Boff is more cautious than Sobrino about the implications of the Gospel evidence: "We cannot speak about Jesus, but only with Jesus as starting point," he admits.[1] Nevertheless, the "task" of Latin American christology is "revealing the unity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith."[2] Christology for Latin America interprets Jesus in such a way that prior doctrinal statements are not allowed to obscure the relevance of Christ to the pervasive injustice common on that continent. According to Boff, the characteristics of such a Christology should stress the primacy of anthropology over ecclesiology, the primacy of future over fact, of criticism over dogmatics, of the social over the personal, of "orthopraxis" over orthodoxy.[3]

Boff's Christ is, literally, homo revelatus. We have noted this idea in the work of Karl Barth and John McIntyre, Boff concurs that "in the person of Jesus Christ there takes place the revelation not only of God, but also of man."[4] The surprising thing we notice in Boff's work, however, is that he repeatedly quotes and obliquely refers to the anthropology of Ludwig Feuerbach. In this section we must observe that in Latin American theology of liberation, there is no attempt to make a clear distinction between theology and anthropology, between the kingdom of God understood by Jesus and the 'utopia' within history in which humanity is able to fulfill its hopes, finding an authentic atmosphere for love in a just social order. For Boff, whose influential work has affected many of the Latin Americans, there is a continuous point of contact between the historical Jesus and humanity in its struggle to recreate itself. Boff's theology begins with anthropology, and there is little distinction between Christology and anthropology, for the kingdom of God interprets both.

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1. ibid. p. 181 / 3. ibid. pp. 44 ff.
2. ibid. p. 11. New Testament scholars will note that Boff's characterization of the "task" for Latin American Christology is not very different from the emphasis of "The New Quest for the Historical Jesus" which has sought various ways to reconcile "the Jesus of History" with "The Christ of Faith". cf. J.M.Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, SCM Press, London, 1959. For a modern Catholic North American View, cf. James P. Mackey, Jesus, The Man and the Myth, SCM Press, London, 1979, Chapters 1 and 7.
4. John McIntyre, On the Love of God, Collins, London, 1962, p. 182 (cf. above, Intro. p. 1)

Without reploughing the ground that was planted in Chapter 1 above, it may be important briefly to document the allusions to Feuerbachian anthropology to be found in the Latin American literature. When Feuerbach is referred to directly the reference is often alongside a reference to Marx. Ellacuria, for example, adopts and (somewhat inappropriately) intensifies Marx's critique of Feuerbach's praxis according to Marx's 1845 fragment called "Theses on Feuerbach". Ellacuria, however, gives little indication of a first-hand reading of Feuerbach, for he takes Marx's mention of "dirty Jewish" praxis to be a common line of thought in Feuerbach's writings.[1] Ellacuria goes on to assert that "Feuerbach is wrong in thinking that anthropological purification is to be attained by abandoning praxis in every form."[2] Such an allegation gives no indication of the theory that Marx was actually criticizing: that human activity in its 'essence' stems from the imagination and what one believes. Marx's dialectical view, of course, is that what one believes to be true derives from the actual experience of reshaping history. Ellacuria's description of Feuerbach's "flight into individualistic interiorization", a "theoretical, purely contemplative, and interior approach," could hardly be derived from an awareness of Feuerbach's wide social concerns which are so often adopted directly by Marx himself.

Gutierrez, Sobrino, and Boff, however, reveal in their writings an awareness of Feuerbach's critique of traditional Christianity and of the "philosophy of ontology" which Miranda calls "a philosophy of injustice." In an intricate analysis, Gutierrez links Feuerbach's critique of faith in contrast to love with the "death of God" movement of the nineteen-sixties. Similarly, he links Marx's emphasis upon an egäliterian society with the current emphasis upon hope developed

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1. cf. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. pp. 16-17, 138-139 I can find no reference to such a form of "Tatigkeit" in Feuerbach's works. It is, indeed, difficult to guess why Marx uses such a term, unless it refers to Feuerbach's critique of the idea of creation in the Jewish religion. cf. The Essence of Christianity, Harper, 1957 (op. cit.), Appendix 10, pp 298 ff.
2. Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 139

by Moltmann and related to the philosophy of Bloch. Gutierrez appears to imply that at different times in the history of theology, faith, love, and hope (in that order) have been given primacy. Just as Feuerbach's emphasis upon love was a dialectical process derived from Hegelian "faith" (as Gutierrez thinks[1]), Marx's development of Communism is the dialectical synthesis of love and hope. A similar movement is noticed in contemporary theology.

> In former years one had the impression that a theology centered on the love of God and neighbour had replaced a theology concerned especially with faith and the corresponding orthodoxy. The primacy of faith was followed by the "primacy of charity". This permitted the notion of love of neighbour to be recovered as an essential element of Christian life. But paradoxically, at the same time this was also partially responsible for the fact that for some the relationship with God was obscured and became difficult to live out and understand. Today, due partly perhaps to such impasses, the perspective of a new primacy seems to be emerging - that of hope, which liberates history because of its openness to the God who is to come. If faith was reinterpreted by charity, both are now being re-evaluated in terms of hope.[2]

Gutierrez' specific illustrations from Feuerbach, emphasizing human love as "the truth" of Christianity, the sacramental nature of the ordinary elements of bread, water, and wine and the opposition of dogmatic faith to "a religion of love", lead us to suspect that Gutierrez himself intends to form some synthesis of Feuerbachian love with Marxist praxis and hope.[3] (The content of Gutierrez' 'synthesis' between love and hope, while avoiding atheism, will be outlined below.)

Sobrino adapts major Feuerbachian ideas at at least two points. The first is his affirmation that "when Christians talk about love

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1. cf. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 219; Gutierrez says, "For Feuerbach the Hegelian system was based on faith, hence its strongly Christian character, its rigidity, its authoritarian and repressive characteristics." This fits Gutierrez' own analysis well, but it may not do justice to either Hegel or Feuerbach. Feuerbach's main objection to Hegel's system was the pervasive "faith" in reason. Dogmatic faith was a function of the primacy of reason over love in the system, misused by theologians. But Gutierrez is close enough, and it is in any case a moot point.
2. ibid. pp. 218-219
3. ibid, pp. 219-220; notes on pp. 241-242; Gutierrez is aware of Hegel's early emphasis on love, but says Feuerbach was not aware of it. On the contrary, I have argued that Feuerbach's love is to a large degree that of the young Hegel.

of God, they are talking materially about real, historical love for human beings."

> When we talk about "loving God in Christian terms," we are using the expression in a totally novel and complicated way. "Love of God" is a doxological expression. It asserts that the ultimate human reality and the ultimate experience of meaningfulness is to be found in the practice of love...Christian faith maintains that it is impossible to "love God" directly, that this love must be mediated through a historical love.[1]

The Feuerbachian anthropology here is unmistakeable. With the "love of God" (i.e. love for God) quantified as "material love for humans", and the interpretation of "loving God" as a "doxological expression" proclaiming the ultimate meaningfulness of human love, we can hardly help but recall Feuerbach.[2] Similarly, Sobrino's emphasis upon the passibility of God and upon the transcendent power of suffering is another Feuerbachian motif. In this case he refers to Feuerbach directly: "suffering precedes thought."[3] Despite questions about Sobrino's exegetical formulation, he certainly makes a positive contribution to Christology by interpreting the human experience of suffering for Latin American peoples. Although it is not clear that Sobrino relies substantially on Feuerbach's observations about the primacy of suffering, the similarity, intentional or inadvertent, is remarkable.

Leonardo Boff's Jesus Christ Liberator offers the most comprehensive integration of Feuerbachian themes with Christian theology. (Since Gutierrez and Boff both published their books relatively early in the rise of Latin American theology of liberation (1971 and 1972 respectively), it is possibly to them that much of the anthropocentric base of theology in Latin America is due. For example, Boff's Christology precedes Sobrino's.) Boff's constant reference

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1. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 172
2. cf. Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. pp. 56-57
3. ibid. pp. 59 ff. (Sobrino offers no reference, but the idea is found in Chapter V of The Essence of Christianity, "The Mystery of the Suffering God.")

point appears to be Feuerbach's interpretation of the Incarnation, without the latter's negative and atheistic implications. Jesus is "the new humanity", "a man like us".[1] Christ did not come to bring any cultural model in particular, nor to found a Christian culture. He did not come to establish a rigid dogma, nor "a morality without a heart". "But he came to create an atmosphere, a love and reciprocity that ought to be realized in all situations, in all social and political systems, and in every articulation of religion and morality."[2] In Jesus appeared "the goodness and humanitarian love of God."[3] Jesus discloses "a new morality of love", and "indiscriminate love without limits" to be exemplary for humanity.[4] In Christ "the law is relativized and put at the service of love."[5] Jesus is "a person of extraordinary good sense, creative imagination, and originality."[6] For Jesus evil does not exist to be comprehended, but "conquered by love".[7] But Jesus conquers evil, initially, by "all that is authentically human": anger and joy, goodness and toughness, friendship, sorrow, and temptation.[8] Jesus preaches "utopia", the kingdom of God, and realizes that it is possible in history (Luke 4:18 ff.).[9]

Interpreting this "Jesus of history", Boff claims that anthropology ought to be elaborated with Christology as its point of departure. "By means of the Incarnation we come to know who in fact we are and what we are destined for."[10] He recalls the affirmation of Gaudium et Spes in declaring the universal significance of Christ: "By his Incarnation, the Son of God has united himself in some fashion

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1. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. pp. 20-21
2. ibid. pp. 40-41 Feuerbach's repeated assertion is that "God is a heart," and that morality must be based not on law, but on love. cf. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity. p. 47 (op. cit.)
3. ibid. p. 97
4. ibid.
5. ibid. p. 98
6. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. pp. 80 ff. (Boff incorporates one of Feuerbach's most central themes, "imagination," into his image of Jesus)
7. ibid. p. 119 (We recall Barth's allegation that Feuerbach misunderstood evil.)
8. ibid. 87 ff.
9. ibid. p. 52
10. ibid. p. 205

with every man."[1] The sin which Jesus came to correct as well as to forgive is "an incapacity to love without egoism".[2] Christ is "the supreme lover".[3] He shows us that each person is the 'locus' where we can find God. "The other when loved and accepted in greatness and smallness reveals a palpable transcendence..."[4] From Jesus' way of being-for-others we learn our own future way of being and authentically existing.[5] Homo absconditus becomes homo revelatus: "God made himself human so that the human could become God."[6] In Christ "is revealed that which is most divine in persons and most human in God".[7]

Boff echoes further several of the themes of Feuerbach in outlining the life that is faithful to Jesus. Appropriately enough, the final chapter of the first edition of his book is entitled "Reflections on the Essence of Christianity." The eucharist, he says, "transforms us into what we consume".[8] "Christ did not come to found a new religion, but to bring a new human being, one who is not defined by the established criteria of society, but by the cause of love, which is the cause of Christ."[9] "It is by loving and allowing ourselves to be loved by others that we discover our true depth and its mystery."[10] "The 'I' does not exist except when created and nourished by a 'you' (thou)."[11] "The more we are oriented to the infinite and the other, the greater our likelihood of being humanized, that is, of realizing our human essence."[12]

With this latter juxtaposition of the "I" and the "thou", the "infinite and the other", in which "human essence" is to be

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1. ibid. p. 194
2. ibid. p. 202
3. ibid. p. 215
4. ibid. p. 218
5. ibid. p. 197
6. ibid. (almost an exact quote from Feuerbach)
7. ibid. p. 97
8. ibid. p. 223
9. ibid. p. 221
10. ibid. p. 251
11. ibid.
12. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 251

realized, we cannot escape the definite relationship between Boff and Feuerbach. Boff has attempted a creative response to what other Latin American theologians have often hinted: Marx's praxis alone is not sufficient for the Christocentric ethos pervading Latin America. As Dussel and Miranda have suggested, Marx was "not dialectical enough" to be able to entertain the possibility of a thoroughly practical and liberative Christianity.[1] But with reference to Feuerbach's anthropology, both "utopia" and the kingdom of heaven may simultaneously be conceived and created through the "new humanity" that Christ brings to the world.

5. Christology, Anthropology, and the Kingdom of God

Boff's attempt to integrate Feuerbachian anthropology with a liberative, practice-oriented Christology is no impulsive exercise in theological extremism. Rather, it is a closely considered and relatively cautious example of the general emphasis upon, and hope for, a more just society in Latin America. The image of such a society is typically modelled upon both Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God and also upon Karl Marx's vision of true Communism, to be achieved in history by the human capacity to transform, dialectically, the materials and forces which form society. Given this combination of images, there has been in Latin America a subtle shift in the presuppositions which have traditionally been associated with the respective ideas of the kingdom of God and Communist (or socialist) "utopia". On the one hand, the kingdom of God is not conceived mainly as the responsibility and activity of God alone, who breaks into the historical epoch through cataclysmic and omnipotent usage of supra-historical power.[2] On the other hand, "utopia" is rarely conceived as the purely atheistic and totally materialist

1. cf. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 278; Enrique Dussel Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 16. Miranda says Marx was "not sufficiently dialectical." Dussel says he is "left with no radical critique."
2. The Latin American view of the kingdom of God is somewhat comparable with that of The 19th century Liberals. But there are differences.

product of humanity, unsupported by God. Boff, typically, describes "utopia" in terms which racall Feuerbach's "feeling", Marx's vision, Jesus' reconciliation, and a particularly Latin American brand of hope.

> ...utopia is born in the springs of hope. It is responsible for models that seek a perfecting of our reality, models that do not allow the social process to stagnate nor society ideologically to absolutize itself, models that maintain society permanently open to ever increasing transformation. Faith promises and demonstrates as realized in Christ a utopia that consists in a world reconciled, a world that is the fulfilment of what we are creating here on earth with feeling and love.[1]

In a similar type of synthesis, the Marxist Miranda asserts that

> ...dialectics has to conceive of matter in such a way that it includes in matter the existence of love, of heroism, of unselfish dedication, and of intuition, especially the intuition of the absolute moral imperative.[2]

Miranda even goes to the length of suggesting that the truly dialectical approach to sin and injustice must consider that since death is so closely allied with sin, the removal of sin from the world is a real historical possibility which may also be the destruction of death itself.[3] Miranda attests that "the transformation of the cosmos clearly depends on the realization of justice on earth (Rom. 8:19)."[4] Illustrating a form of optimism which may strike us as shocking, he says, "in both Marx and the Bible the basis for all thought is this thesis which is the most revolutionary imaginable: Sin and evil are not inherent to humanity and history; they began one day through human work and they can therefore be eliminated."[5]

Synthesizing the ideas of several of the Latin American theologians, it may be possible to sketch the general concept of the kingdom of God, a "utopia" in history, which appears so often in their works. Since the image of God's kingdom and an earthly "utopia" comprises all of the related themes we have been discussing, I will attempt

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1. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 45
2. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 274
3. ibid. pp. 278-279
4. ibid. p. 276
5. ibid. p. 277

a conceptual chronology for the sake of brevity, although the concepts must be simultaneously related.

The kingdom of God, a historical "utopia", may be described as follows.

(1) The Transformation of Nature

In a characteristic phase that recalls Feuerbach, Boff tells us that "God so loved matter that he assumed it, and so loved human beings that he became one of us in order to liberate us."[1] In Christ, the goal toward which all the forces of evolution tend is attained.[2] The kingdom of God cannot be the focus of a demythologizing programme, because the resurrection confirmed that God becoming human also entails the transformation of matter as we know it.[3] The kingdom cannot be rendered a private or individually spiritual concept because it is an event of cosmic proportions.[4] Gutierrez suggests that the kingdom of God is the continuation of the liberative, salvific, and creative love of God which intimates a universal salvation on every plane, including matter. Humanity participates in this salvific creation. "The work of man, the transformation of nature, continues creation only if it is a human act..."[5] (i.e. not alienated by unjust socio-economic structures.) The kingdom of God is "authentic liberation at every level of human existence."[6] It therefore includes not only the spiritual and moral liberation of human beings, but also the economic, social, political, and educational structures which contibute toward the human's capacity to transform himself and his environment. For Miranda, explicitly, and for others implicitly, it also includes the dialectical negation of death itself, the ultimate transformation of matter.[7]

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1. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 162
2. ibid. p. 22 (a reference to Teilhard de Chardin)
3. ibid. p. 24
4. ibid. p. 25
5. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 173
6. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 44
7. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 278

(2) Historical Possibility

The Latin American liberation theologians generally confirm that the kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus was and is a possibility within history. It is not to be determined by nor identified with history, but is initiated and to be substantively formed in this world. Ellacuria says, "The message and promise of Christianity cannot be deduced a priori from the nature of man or the world; it must be related to an irruption that is both free and historical."[1] For him there is an "intimacy" between those who fashion history and those who proclaim the kingdom of God, for it is through the changes of history that the Kingdom comes.[2] The incarnation of God, in history, as a human being, proclaims that "the kingdom of God is no longer an unattainable utopia."[3] Miranda asserts that "Paul, John, and the synoptics were convinced that the Kingdom absolutely had to be realized. And on earth, of course."[4] For the Latin American theologians Jesus' message is not about a "realized eschatology", but rather about a realizable historical society which correlates with the promise of the Old Testament (Jer. 31:31 ff.) and the vision of its content in history as seen by Jesus, and initiated by his proclamation and identification with it (Luke 4:18 ff.).

(3) Incorporated in Jesus Christ

Therefore the liberation Christology of Latin America is centred upon the initiation of the kingdom of God by and in the person of Jesus Christ, the God-Man, who reveals both the character of God's creation in its liberative and salvific modes, and also the character of authentic humanity unalienated by the forces of sin and injustice. What Jesus preached was the kingdom of God, not himself.[5] He preached

1. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 133
2. ibid. p. 84
3. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 61
4. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 59
5. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 41 (quoting Rahner)

love" and "utopia".[1] He understood himself as the kingdom's "president."[2] His life and ministry was totally directed toward the establishment of the new order which he envisioned, confirmed finally by his suffering and his love on its behalf. The whole life of Christ was "a giving and being for others". "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (John 13:1).[3] Christ's resurrection is seen by most of the liberationists as the vindication of Christ's cause and the advent of a new possibility for humanity within history, the true dawn of God's kingdom.

(4) The Divine in the Human

"Jesus Christ," says Boff, "is not a myth but the eschatological realization of the fundamental possibility that God placed in human nature."[4] Christ is the revelation of the divine in the human, of the human's capacity to create himself and his environment in a transcendent fashion not determined or conditioned by, nor totally limited to, the 'givenness' of present means or resources. Since Jesus is "a man like us," human nature contains "the same transcendence and ability to relate to the absolute."[5] Generally in echo of Feuerbach, Boff says, "the human mystery evokes the mystery of God";[6] and Medellín affirmed, "in order to know God it is necessary to know man."[7] Somewhat similarly out of context, Karl Barth is drafted by Gutierrez to demonstrate "the indissoluble unity of man and God: "Man is the measure of all things since God became Man."[8] For Ellacuria the kingdom of God heralds the "total salvation of man in and through his intrinsic deification".[9] Although the Latin

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1. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. pp. 24,52
2. ibid. p. 52
3. ibid. p. 117
4. ibid. p. 20
5. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 21
6. ibid. p. 56
7. quoted by Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 84
8. Karl Barth, Against the Stream, Philosophical Library, New York, 1954, p. 36 quoted by Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. pp. 7-8
9. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 93

American authors are often more conscious of the limitations of human nature than these quotations intimate, it is clear that, in spite of Barth's critique of Feuerbach, "the talk of God in man" has not been "cut out at the roots".[1]

(5) Instituted by God

Despite the emphasis within liberation theology upon the Kingdom's historical character, the idea is not completely alien to the authors that God himself is responsible for its institution. Sobrino, in his two-stage development of Jesus' ministry, gives a Christological explanation for the conviction that God will not, or cannot, establish the Kingdom by himself. As traced above, Sobrino suggests that Jesus moved from a rather passive consciousness of the Kingdom's imminence to an active ministry finally enmeshed in human suffering. Boff's explanation is perhaps more dialectical:

> "Kingdom of God" signifies the realization of a utopia cherished in human hearts, total human and cosmic liberation. It is the new situation of an old world, now replete with God and reconciled with itself. In a word, it could be said that the kingdom of God means a total, global, structural revolution of the old order, brought about by God and only by God. Consequently, the kingdom is a kingdom of God in a subjective and objective sense.
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> ...In order that such a liberation from sin, from its personal and cosmic consequences, and from all other alienation suffered in creation, be realized, Christ makes two fundamental demands: He demands personal conversion and postulates a restructuring of the human world.[2]

This interpretation brings up the whole question of grace conceived in the light of Catholic tradition. The kingdom of God, accordingly, is in liberation theology an extension of God's 'infusion' of his love and will into human beings. It is grace that makes possible both the "conversion" which Boff mentions, and the "restructuring of the human world", as the effect of grace which is a "faith that works through love". As Boff asserts, "the grace of God is

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1. cf. Karl Barth, Introduction to Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity, op. cit. p.xxx. (Like Feuerbach, Barth might be surprised to find himself used as an exponent of Latin American Christological anthropology.)
2. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. pp. 63-64

the grace of human beings."[1] A liberating grace is "the consequence of divine love."[2] The grace which brings in the Kingdom is not one which works from beyond history, but one which is intimately associated with the instilling of God's love (Romans 5:5) into humanity. The liberation authors do not attempt to separate the grace of God from the authentic loves of human beings, nevertheless there is preserved the concept of a "divine grace", often called "gratuitousness" in liberation thought, which is God's love, will, and power at work through human activity. Thus, without decreasing the emphasis upon the responsibility of human beings to fashion the kingdom, Sobrino can say, "The kingdom is not merely an extension of human potentialities; it breaks in as grace."[3]

(6) Built by Human Beings

Although the kingdom of God may be conceived as essentially the work of God, the Latin American liberation theologians stress that it is existentially the work of humanity. This idea of the nineteenth century liberals, much criticized in Protestant theology, is to a certain extent prevalent in Latin American theology, yet it is substantially reinterpreted in the light of Jesus' critical stance toward the institutions of his day. Sobrino, who repeatedly talks about the "building up of the kingdom", is critical of Harnack's image of Jesus "who fulfilled all basic human yearnings" but "was nothing other than the ideal bourgeois citizen of the nineteenth century with faith in progress. Jesus thus stood in a direct line of continuity with human realities, confirming and perhaps ennobling them but certainly not criticizing them."[4]

In an almost unified voice the Latin American theologians

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1. Leonardo Boff, Liberating Grace, trans. John Drury, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York 1979, p.105
2. ibid. pp. 101-103
3. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 44
4. ibid. p. 61; cf. Adolf Harnack, Das Wesen des Christentums, Siebenstern, Munich 1964 (E.T. What is Christianity?) p. 42

assert that the kingdom of God is not to be established through a waiting game. It is to be actively built in and through all the dynamics of history. "Liberation theology," says Sobrino, "is concerned with the practical problem of building up and realizing the kingdom of God in the face of captivity."[1] Despite Sobrino's emphasis upon the power of suffering, he says, "liberation theology does not take the tack of Job and Dostoyevsky."[2] Moral theology must be reinterpreted in light of the question: "what is to be done to establish the kingdom of God in history?"[3] Individuals actually "become Christians through their efforts to fashion the kingdom into a reality".[4] Sobrino aptly summarizes the active theology which is so characteristic of liberation thought in Latin America: "We gain access to God by trying to fashion history, and we experience that process as both a grace and a concrete line of praxis."[5] The kingdom of God, a utopia in history, depends not upon the repetition of the Jewish prayer, "How long O Lord?" but rather upon "collaboration with God" in creating the conditions for its growth.

(7) Present and Future

The idea of the Kingdom in liberation theology is conceived both as a present and immanent fact and also as a future, yet imminent goal. Both points of view are linked with Jesus' own attitude to it, and the juxtaposition of present and future 'tenses' is certainly confirmed by much New Testament scholarship.[6] For the Latin Americans both ideas are often stressed in ways which might seem to be contradictory. Miranda, for example, says, "The true iron-clad refuge of the "I" consists in keeping the eschaton perpetually in the future."[7] For Miranda the proclamation of the Kingdom as future may delay

1. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 36
2. ibid.
3. ibid. p. 113
4. ibid. p. 114
5. ibid. p. 307
6. cf., for example, Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, trans. Irene and Fraser McLuskey with J.M. Robinson, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1960, p. 90
7. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 248

its arrival. Dussel, on the other hand, asserts that "Only when we realize that the kingdom is in the future and that to be a member of the Church is not a signal honor but a responsibility will we see the Church in a whole new light."[1] For Dussel, the hierarchical tendency of the Church to see itself as the guardian of the keys to the Kingdom is a threat to the Kingdom itself. Both Miranda's and Dussel's views merge on the issue of social justice. The Kingdom is 'present' because Christ has confirmed its presence among the oppressed, and also because a greater justice is possible today. The kingdom is 'future' because such a justice has not yet been achieved, nor is it totally conditioned by the possibilities in history so far revealed and acknowledged, least of all by the institutions, including the Church, which govern history. The Kingdom's full consummation cannot be deduced beforehand from what we have so far discovered about humanity and nature, but it is already present in Christ, "in whom we catch a glimpse of the future of the world".[3]

(8) Inherited by the Poor

We have noted the extent to which the Latin American liberation theologians stress Christ's kinship with the poor. This emphasis is particularly found in the gospel of Luke. The Magnificat of Mary illustrates appropriately many of the liberation themes which are associated with the kingdom of God. God "the saviour (i.e. liberator) has regarded the low estate of his servant; "God's mercy" is announced for those who live according to his justice; "he has scattered the proud..."; "he has filled the hungry"; "the rich he has sent empty away" (Luke 1:46-55). Gutierrez tells us that the kingdom's advent is concretely announced in "the love of Jesus toward marginated men."[3] Jose Miguez Bonino says that Christ, in renouncing

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1. Enrique Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 89
2. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 43
3. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 223

divine power to settle human affairs, simultaneously identified with the impotence of the poor.[1] Sobrino's exegesis of the Beatitudes shows Jesus, aware of the injustice experienced by the poor, first to declare to them a God who draws near to them in grace, if 'not yet' in terms of justice.[2] In the same Beatitudes, Santa Ana elaborates, it is clear that they, the poor, are to be the inheritors of God's kingdom.[3] And after Jesus' unequivocal statement in Matthew 25:31 ff., Dussel asserts that we may identify "the poor as the epiphany of God."[4] Therefore liberation theology is unified in stressing that solidarity with and service on behalf of the poor constitutes the only authentic stance for those who wish to collaborate with God in fashioning the Kingdom. (Neither must the intrinsic relation of "the poor" and the "proletariat" be missed if we are fully to appreciate the synthesis of themes which inform the Latin American theology of liberation.)

(9) Social and Political

Sobrino declares that the Cross is either "the end of religion" or of the kingdom of God as Jesus understood it. This radical statement is largely typical of liberation thought. Jesus not only reformed, but abolished the old cult and priesthood. They are to be replaced by genuine historical and secular love.[5] Sobrino goes on to state that "the justice of Jesus" intimates "some new form of social coexistence where class differences have been abolished."[6] While Sobrino may be guilty of overlooking the implications of the Old Testament covenant, which Jesus may be said to have fulfilled, the general liberation trend is away from cultic worship and toward a faith which is defined, not by piety, but by practice. In this

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1. Jose Miguez Bonino, Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age, SPCK, London, 1975, p. 123
2. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 57
3. Julio de Santa Ana, Good News to the Poor, op. cit. p. 108
4. Enrique Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 176
5. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 90
6. ibid. p. 120

sense, for most of the authors, there is also a movement away from Feuerbach and toward Marx. Theology is transformed not merely into anthropology, but also into politics. Ellacuria reminds us of Oscar Cullmann's notation that the inscription on the Cross describes "a purely political crime".[1] The extent of Jesus' political activity and 'offence' is much discussed in the literature, and there cannot yet be discerned any general agreement about the implications to be drawn from it. Ellacuria's ambiguity is somewhat characteristic. He says that "Jesus' mission must be understood politically precisely because it is an alternative to Zealotism." But Jesus, who did not "actually kill", is alleged to have involved himself in "incessant combat" displaying "violent attitudes".[2] It is clear, however, that for the liberationists, the conflict entailed in establishing the Kingdom is a secondary theme arising from a conception of the Kingdom as a social, and so necessarily political entity. Gutierrez aptly quotes Paul Rocoeur in stressing that, at bottom, "the collective event is the object and means of love."[3] Because of the social nature of this love, the kingdom of God is inconceivable apart from political action.

(10) Criticism and Conflict

Since Jesus' life and death was a consistent struggle against injustice, siding with the poor, against the rich and powerful, the liberationists affirm that all Christology must be critical of the established order, and liberation theology cannot avoid diverse kinds of conflict as the Kingdom is proclaimed and 'constructed'. Sobrino tells us that a simple approach to Christ as love or as power is inadequate, for it may indicate "an apparent neutrality vis-à-vis the inequities of society".[4] Although Jesus talked about

1. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 47 (cf. Oscar Cullmann The State in the New Testament, Scribner's, New York, 1956, p. 43)
2. ibid. cf. pp. 67;120
3. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 47
4. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. xvi

love for enemies, he asserts, "this has nothing to do with pacifism".[1] Segundo affirms that "just because we should love our enemies does not mean we shouldn't have them." Segundo is critical of German "political theology" (i.e. primarily Moltmann and Metz) because "it systematically tries to eliminate from theologico-political language any term that might suggest a causal relationship between historical activity and the construction of the eschatological kingdom."[2] Segundo implies that a dependence upon the Lutheran idea of justification by faith has led to an emphasis upon language of the past and anticipation of the future to the extent that there is an attenuation of the present. Segundo's conclusion (which may not be totally fair) is that Metz and Moltmann end up with "a politically neutral theology".[3] His critique discloses the major question which Latin Americans must ask of any theologian purporting to proclaim the coming Kingdom: "Through whom or what?"[4] Sobrino's answer to this question again is typical of many of the Latin American theologians: the element of conflict underlies Jesus' concretion of moral values. "The pointed edge of conflict is not to be found solely in passively suffering the consequences of injustice...It also includes one's experience of the fact that justice can be realized in history only through an active struggle against injustice, a struggle that often ends in defeat."[5] For many of the Latin Americans, then, this struggle with the poor to fashion the Kingdom in history takes the form of "class struggle" (the many allusions to which need not be elaborated).

(11) A "Praxis" of Justice, Love, and Hope

To sum up the whole concept of the kingdom of God as generally understood in the Latin American theology of liberation, we must

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1. ibid. p. 122
2. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 144
3. ibid. p. 145; (cf. also Gutierrez, op. cit. p. 200)
4. ibid. p. 147
5. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. pp. 124-125

be able to include all of the above descriptive terms in a comprehensive human activity which integrates the New Testament themes of justice, love, and hope. Jose Miguez Bonino (as well as Boff and Sobrino) specifically asserts that the commandment to love God and the neighbour as oneself is set in the context of the kingdom of God and cannot be understood apart from it. "Love is inextricably interwoven with hope and justice." "It is not content to intend and demonstrate, but intends to accomplish."[1] The kingdom of God, says Bonino, is "the realm of creative love".[2] Jesus' commandment of love "is not interpersonal or intersubjective but cosmic and eschatological".[3] Because of the radical nature of this commandment, it is solidly a social and political dynamic, not individualistic or spiritual, which entails action on behalf of the oppressed for the achievement of greater justice. To this extent, says Bonino, it is not only unopposed to class struggle, but in fact demands it. Paul Ricoeur, once again, becomes a resource for the Latin Americans: "If love is a category of the kingdom of God and, as such, it implies an eschatological dimension, then it equals justice.. at the same time justice is the efficacious institutional and social realization of love."[4] Latin American theologians talk about "a praxis of love" and "a praxis of justice". Although such terms may be somewhat vague, they do indeed intimate the hope which they have in humanity. We can hardly do better than Leonardo Boff in summing up this hope, which even in the tragedies of the most profound human suffering is still identifiable: "The kingdom of God is already initiated in this world wherever greater justice is established, greater love reigns, and new horizons that capture God's word and revelation within life are opened up."[5]

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1. Jose Miguez Bonino, Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age, op. cit. p. 13
2. ibid. p. 111
3. ibid. p. 114
4. Paul Ricoeur "El conflicto signo de contradiccion y de unidad?" Criterio, Buenos Aires, May 24, 1973, no. 1668. p. 255; quoted by Bonino, ibid.
5. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 261

6. Critique: Foundation Shaking or Sabre Rattling?

As I have already noted, and the liberationists often attest, it is very difficult for an American or European theologian schooled in Protestant theology to adequately criticize, much less correct, Latin American theology of liberation. My remarks about the 'theological foundations' should therefore be somewhat reserved. First of all it is important to note that any critique of liberation theology is really the criticism of a critique. Whether any subject can properly criticize its critic is certainly worth considering.

The foundations of Latin American liberation theology are by no means new. What is apparent, however, is that a new blend has been constructed of the old. The blend itself is not particularly innovative in the syntheses of theological themes, but rather in the combination of theology with a particular cultural milieu. To this extent, the claim that this theology is dialectical is certainly true. Despite its repeated criticism of European philosophy and theology, much of the Latin American 'novelty' is grounded precisely upon European thought. I have shown the importance of Feuerbach's anthropology in the literature. Often this anthropology is somewhat unconsciously integrated with Roman Catholic premises, possibly because certain emphases in Catholicism lend themselves to such a synthesis, and possibly because much of Karl Marx's philosophy incorporates various Feuerbachian principles, and there is a conscious attempt to reconcile Marx with Catholic Christianity. Feuerbach's anthropology, of course, is not created out of nothing, but stems from a strong background of Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kant, Leibniz, and other precursors of modern thought. Without the Enlightenment, liberation theology would probably have to create one.

Frederick Herzog, himself the author of a book called Liberation Theology, has offered some suggestions which are both sympathetic to and critical of the Latin Americans. He is disturbed by the Latin American emphasis upon secular ideology, particularly as

represented in the work of Segundo and Miranda. Herzog suggests that the truly liberative theology is one which attempts to minimize ideology, not increase its function as a hermeneutical principle. "We always need to work towards elimination of the ideology factor," says Herzog. "Text criticism needs to be accompanied by self-criticism." Although Herzog is sympathetic with the argument that hermeneutics is often governed by ideological presuppositions, one presupposition exegesis cannot escape is "the historical method of interrogating the text".[1] "Christo-praxis", not merely historical activity, must precede secular insight into hermeneutics, for "the basic theological truth cannot be absorbed in a hermeneutic, not even a liberation hermeneutic".[2] We might also note that according to Marx's own critique of "ideology", Herzog's remarks may be more "Marxist" that Segundo's open-ended "freedom for ideologies".[3] It must be said, however, that not all of the Latin Americans follow Segundo on this point. Boff, for example, is consistent in saying that "following Jesus" precedes even Christology as life itself is more important than reflection. One might wish that more of the Latin Americans were as cautious as Boff in adopting certain secular viewpoints which are not so easily reconciled with Christology and discipleship as some of the Latin Americans assume. Historical analysis, for example, "cannot be the tail that wags the dog."[4]

Despite Fierro's remark that liberation theology is a negative theology, there is much more positive about it than its inherent criticism might indicate. As Dussel asserts, atheism is a relative idea, depending upon which God you are being atheistic toward. The Latin Americans have been atheistic toward the God who has been so often used to underscore human greed at the expense of human suffering. To this extent the numerous syntheses with the atheism

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1. Frederick Herzog, "Liberation Hermeneutic as Ideology Critique?" Interpretation Richmond, Va. Vol. 28, pp. 387 ff. (1974)
2. Frederick Herzog, Justice Church, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1980 p. 97
3. cf. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, Chapter Four (op. cit.)
4. Frederick Herzog, Justice Church, op. cit. p. 92

of Marxist thought is hopeful, insofar as the latter expresses the intention of ending "the exploitation of man by man". Nevertheless, the common acceptance of Marx's dictum that (some sort of) violence is the midwife of old societies pregnant with new ones leads us to wonder just how far the liberation theologians are willing to go. There is no agreement on the kind of militancy required to establish the Kingdom, but Sobrino is perhaps representative in saying that Jesus' command to love our enemies has nothing to do with pacificism. This question must be explored further. For the moment we may recall the two-edged criticism of Medellín: "One should not abuse the patience of a people that for years has borne a situation that would not be acceptable to anyone with any degree of awareness of human rights." But on the other hand, the bishops affirmed, "armed revolution generates new injustices." "One cannot combat a real evil at the price of a greater evil."[1]

Of all the liberation theologians, Leonardo Boff has struck the most consistent chords on the Christological foundation of a love conceived in terms of justice. Boff, for example, does not qualify his interpretation of Jesus' love as Sobrino does in the above paragraph, and as most of the other liberationists do to some degree. For Boff Jesus' love is unconditional, including the love for friends (eschewed by Nygren) and the love for enemies (eschewed by Segundo in the final analysis). Boff's Jesus is certainly critical and militant, yet "at the very moment when he could have initiated violence he immediately orders: 'Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword' (Mt. 26:52)."[2] To distant sounds of sabres rattling, it is encouraging to hear Boff's calm yet critical reply: "They ought to decide for or against Christ."[3]

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1. Medellín Documents, in Gremillion, op. cit. p. 460
2. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 102
3. ibid. p. 103

The common Protestant critique of liberation theology's 'horizontalism' is generally based upon a misapprehension of the idea of grace in liberation thought, and for this reason it is inadmissible, if not totally unfounded. The point at which we left Karl Barth called to mind Barth's assertion that human love can never be divine love. The Latin Americans disagree on the basis of Romans 5:5, where Paul says that God's love is poured into human hearts. The question is part of a continuing debate, and it cannot be settled here. Some of the related premises, however, must be further discussed.

SECTION II. The Content of "Concrete Love"

In this section I want to take a closer look at four specific categories through which the idea of love is conceived in Latin American theology of liberation. Although there is not always general agreement within the literature about (1) effective love (2) violence (3) the love of neighbour, and (4) justice, these themes are common to all the liberation authors. When the liberationists refer to 'love' they mean a practical love. There is no attempt at all to make the kind of conceptual distinctions made, for example, by Anders Nygren. Although agape is specifically mentioned on occasion as the exemplary love of the New Testament, few of the authors (Dussel is an exception) attempt to distinguish agape from the ordinary authentic loves of human beings, insofar as those loves are 'effective' in decreasing the alienation between human beings.

As I have already noted, for the Latin Americans there is no difference between God's love at work through humanity, and God's love conceived ontologically. This idea is directly related both to a Roman Catholic concept of grace, and to the view of anthropology expressed by Feuerbach and conveyed by Marx. It is important to note also that the Augustinian idea of caritas is preserved in Spanish as caridad, normally translated into English as 'charity'.[1] The religious distinction in Spanish between amor and caridad, to which most of the liberation authors strongly object, is equivalent to the English difference between the ordinary word 'love' and the idea of 'Christian charity', meaning the expression of one's love for God through the giving of alms. Thus we have in the liberation literature almost a reversal of Nygren's protest, but with some very Nygren-like implications. On the one hand the Latin Americans

1. The Latin Vulgate, of course, also preserves the use of caritas in distinction from amor. cf. eg. 1 John 4:8 "...Deus est caritas." Latin American theology, it must be remembered, has Latin roots.

suggest that amor, if genuinely turned toward the neighbour, is in fact divine and the infusion of God's love into the human. It is exactly in this way that Feuerbachian anthropology and Catholic liberative grace come together.

1. "Effective Love"

Juan Luis Segundo's idea of "effective love" is an extreme characterization, reminding us somewhat of Reinhold Neibuhr's pragmatism. Indeed, Segundo's ideal of love may be derived from Neibuhr. Segundo asserts (on what basis he does not tell us) that "Christians do not seem to have any problem agreeing that the commandment of Jesus was mutual love."[1] But since "the motive of Christian brotherly love in a society founded on serfdom remains an unrealizable and ideological idea," Christians must be left free to decide what sort of love is "feasible."[2] "Love can only be effective and therefore real when it possesses motives and instruments for being feasible."[3] Jesus, in commanding mutual love (sic) did not spell out clearly what form love must take in successive epochs. He himself was reacting to the crises of his day, exercising his own ideology against others. Thus, says Segundo, a "fresh phenomenological analysis" of what exactly is entailed in the New Testament's "unique commandment of love" is required. "The only perduring rule is that one should try to display the most effective and wide-ranging love possible in a given situation."[4] Segundo concludes that "love is an end which legitimizes all means."[5] (The specific way in which Segundo relates love to the concept of implicit violence, entailed in his interpretation, will be discussed below.)

Although not all of the liberationists are willing to go as far as Segundo, there is a general emphasis upon an "effective", "efficacious", and "concrete" love which must be flexible within

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1. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 155
2. ibid. p. 100
3. ibid. p. 158
4. ibid. p. 155
5. ibid. p. 172

and to some extent conditioned by the historical process in which Latin Americans find themselves. One cannot decide beforehand what sort of love is to be required for liberation, yet "in some essential way it must inform the whole outlook of the Christian and the whole process of history."[1] "There can be no possible limits to love engaged in the struggle against injustice and sin."[2] "Christian love must be fleshed out historically from within the context of the concrete situation." Yet it must be "a redeeming love fraught with sorrow and pain".[3]

There is some difference of opinion in the literature as to whether class struggle is demanded by love, or love presupposes class struggle. All of the liberationists seem to assert that effective love takes sides with the oppressed and the poor. Bonino says, "If class struggle is a fact...then a love which intends to be effective in terms of God's kingdom cannot avoid taking sides."[4] Ellacuria says that class struggle is "the objectification of love in history".[5] For him the danger of the existence of classes is greater than the danger of class struggle. It is clear that for all the liberationists, love must be interpreted in such a way that it may include condemnation, criticism, and rejection, in alliance with God's wrath against injustice. Bonino's point is a fair illustration of the critical alliance with the poor which liberative love must project, and which is so often overlooked by paternalistic Northern aid programmes.

> Why is it therefore that so often Christian ethics and ecclesiastical pronouncements flounder precisely at this point?...Why is it that they...offer plans and projects that presuppose a harmony and coordination of interests and goals of the classes which do not exist?[6]

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1. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 117
2. ibid. p. 121
3. ibid. p. 119
4. Jose Miguez Bonino, Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age, op. cit. p. 119
5. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 121
6. Jose Miguez Bonino, Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age, op. cit. p. 120

> Reconciliation is not achieved by some sort of compromise between the new and the old, but through the defeat of the old and the victory of the new age...The ideological appropriation of the Christian doctrine of reconciliation by the liberal capitalist system is one, if not the, major heresy of our time.[1]

Despite the Marxist flavour of Bonino's assertion, we have shown above that the argument is well-grounded in New Testament theology, particularly in Christ's proclamation of the Kingdom to and among the poor.

Gutierrez and Santa Ana repeatedly stress that Christian love begins with a commitment to the poor and oppressed. Santa Ana, extracting from The Shepherd of Hermas, says that identification with the poor is "a matter of great importance in the preaching of the message of Christian love".[2] Going a bit farther than Gutierrez, who assumes that love must be spontaneous and "gratuitous", Santa Ana says: "Charity in all its forms is no longer a spontaneous action in every case. It is the fulfilment of a duty; it is becoming organized. We are tempted to say it is becoming calculated."[3] Perhaps at the point where love becomes a calculated "duty" we have come full circle in the Enlightenment, back to Kierkegaard's reinterpretation of Kant, or even back to Kant himself. At any rate, we can conclude that in the Latin American theology of liberation, a metaphysical concept of love, unmediated by historical practice in solidarity with the poor, is not considered "effective". Love must "intend to accomplish"; sentiment is not enough.

2. Love and Violence

The problem of violence in relation to love is discussed by several of the liberation theologians.[4] Some degree of violence is generally held to be necessary or inevitable as Christians side with the poor against oppressors. When oppressed people claim their

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1. ibid. p. 121
2. Julio de Santa Ana, Good News to the Poor, op. cit. p. 55
3. Julio de Santa Ana, Good News to the Poor, op. cit. p. 57 (quoting Maurice Goguel)
4. cf. Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. pp. 165 ff; Bonino, Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age, op. cit. pp. 106 ff. Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. pp.154ff.

rights, "inevitable" violence ensues. Such violence is often initially perpetrated upon them by their oppressors as an increase in the subtle and not-so-subtle forms of violence which the oppressors have already been using. In Latin America the use of violence to quell social disorder is ubiquitous. Undergirding the arbitrary violence of police and military governments, however, is the violence of institutions such as multi-national companies, discriminatory health and educational systems, massive property ownership, and legal systems which favour the rich. The continental effect of many forms of violence across Latin America succeeds in the perpetuation of marked social classes with a wide gulf dividing them. To a considerable extent the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America has played an ambiguous role, supporting through its hierarchy almost any government and associated institutions which can provide some sense of 'order', while at the same time maintaining an influential presence among the poor. The extent to which the Church has allowed itself to be used by violent governments and institutions has certainly been noticed by the liberation theologians. At the same time, its influence upon the poor has also been noticed, and the goal of the liberationists is to turn this influence to a political effect. Thus, liberation theologians repeatedly stress that disorder and violence do not <u>begin</u> with class struggle. The disorder and injustice are present facts; violence is built into the system. The Church's role is to fight sin and injustice, not necessarily itself opting for military violence, but realizing that a just society cannot be gained without some kind of conflict.

The extent of the conflict which the Church should support is still a matter of discussion. I have noted Boff's caution, and the warnings of the Medellín bishops. At the other extreme (theologically, if not actually bearing arms) is Segundo.

The Gospels are too apolitical for Segundo. God is not revealed at all in the Bible, except insofar as Jesus demonstrates a God

who often changes his mind reacting to different historical circumstances. "The extant Bible is a complete waste of paper if it was God's intention to provide us with information about himself."[1] "When Jesus talked freely about proffered love and non-resistance to evil, he was facing the same problem of filling the void between his conception of God (or perhaps of the first Christian community) and the problems existing in his age. In short we are dealing with another ideology, not with the content of faith itself."[2] "It is not at all certain that Jesus would have altered the Old Testament view and advised us to turn the other cheek if he had been confronted with the whole issue of Israelite slavery in Egypt."[3] "Jesus' commandment of love and his countless examples and admonitions concerning it in the Gospels must be translated to an era in which real-life love has taken on political forms."[4] "The revolutionary character of a given option does not lie in its content but rather in its real capacity to break up the existing structure rather than to be reabsorbed by the latter."[5] In the Gospels' record of Jesus' teaching on love, "Jesus is calling attention to a gratuitous sort of love that almost seems to be a useless luxury - and that is all. He is not imposing specific commands on people.[6]

Attempting to correct the "terrible superficiality" of analyses of love and violence, Segundo observes that violence is a function of both love and egotism. Love is no less violent than egotism, for love must be understood within the framework of a limited "economy of energy". The command to love our neighbours, whom Segundo defines as "those near us", appears to be similar to "a major pretext of egotism". It is therefore "curious", Segundo says, when the Gospels bid us to love our enemies. Love for our enemies can only be possible,

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1. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 179
2. ibid. p. 116; I have noted in the previous chapter that (contrary to Niebuhr and Segundo) Jesus' advice is not to resist one who is evil, an important difference (cf. Matt. 5:39) which may imply "do not take revenge."
3. ibid. p. 86
4. ibid. p. 71
5. ibid. p. 100
6. ibid. p. 155

in terms of energy, as an extension of our love for our neighbour, and not as an alternative.[1]

It is not altogether clear what Segundo means here. From his assumption that it is mutual love which is commanded by Christ, one would guess that, according to Segundo, one may love either one's neighbour or one's enemy only if the neighbour or enemy allows us to do so and reciprocates.

Segundo states clearly that the parable of the Good Samaritan "is just that, a parable; it is not a moral precept. If we try to force it and turn it into a concrete precept governing every similar occasion, we will not end up with love but rather with an incredible dispersion of energy and an irreparable loss of time for real, effective love."[2] For Segundo the point of the parable is that we can make anyone our neighbour, but not that everyone is our neighbour. "The wholly good Samaritan does not exist." Only by keeping many people "at arm's length" are we able to love anyone enough to make him a neighbour. This use of "the economy of energy" was, according to Segundo, exercised by Christ, and it is a primary use of violence by which love becomes effective. Whenever we choose to love our neighbours, we necessarily exclude others, and such "violence is an intrinsic dimension of any and all concrete love in history, just as it clearly is an intrinsic dimension of any and all concrete egotism."[3] Love has no different means at its disposal than egotism: "By falsely assuming that love possesses its own exclusive means, real-life love ties its own hands and stops up the very source of its energy."[4]

In illustration, Segundo suggests that "love for one's mother, for example, clearly has the same psychic roots as patriotism, prejudice, racism and war."[5] The implication is that, despite the danger

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1. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 158
2. ibid. p. 159
3. ibid. p. 161
4. ibid. p. 158
5. Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, op. cit. p. 158; (a very debatable point)

of egotism, we must love those nearest and dearest first. To protect and preserve our love for these, our neighbours, we use violent means. All law presupposes the violence of enforcement.

> There is, then, no break in continuity between a necessary mental process of segregation and physical violence, however legal and widely accepted the latter may be. This means we must abandon the simplistic notions that prompt us to discover violence only when a revolutionary shoots a gun on the one hand, and to talk about nonviolence as if it were compatible with impersonal laws and their attendant coercive force on the other hand.[1]

Segundo concludes that "we use the word 'love' as the definition of a moral end as a false singular." We rarely choose between love and egotism as the goal or end of our actions, but instead we opt for one specific love over another. "There is no use opting for some sublime love when we do not have the means to carry it through. Opting for a quality that is incapable of realization helps no one actually, whereas we might have been of help if we had chosen a form of love that was less sublime but feasible with respect to real living people."[2]

It is not difficult to see where Segundo's argument is leading. If we can believe that "love is the end which legitimizes all means", then we may follow it to the end. On the other hand, if we stand with Boff, then we must somehow learn to draw a line between a critical, struggling, and even militant battle against injustice, and the tragedy of killing, deprivation, and victimization of innocents which entails even greater injustice. Segundo is, of course, right on many points. Of course there is an "economy of energy" to which Jesus and all persons are somewhat subject. Of course our loves are rarely selfless, and of course, we do love those nearest and dearest first. Nevertheless, this is not Jesus' kerygma, and it is certainly not the sort of love on which the idea of the kingdom of God is predicated. (For that matter, it is not even the sort of love upon which Feuerbach's "species consciousness" is predicated.)

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1. ibid. p. 160
2. ibid. p. 172

I have already criticized Niebuhr for his pragmatism, and for making "mutual love" a Christian ideal, for it certainly was not "commanded" by Christ, although it is indeed a requirement within the fellowship of disciples.[1] But where love is not reciprocated, it must be loved forth, not rationalized away. The selfless love of enemies, and of neighbours even while they remain enemies, continues to be the New Testament ideal, and Segundo's pragmatism does not change the good advice to put away our swords.

The other Latin American theologians do not go to Segundo's extreme of making violence a function of love, but they have confirmed its pervasiveness in history, its 'legitimation' by established systems at the expense of the impotent and impoverished, its inherent identification with change, its capacity both to produce and prevent suffering, its implicit and explicit presence in the words and ministry of Jesus, and its unavoidable alliance with a commitment to a better world. They have warned the Church that an ostrich-like approach to secular violence will not make it go away, and may indeed help to perpetuate it. They have identified and criticized the institutional violence which comes even through benevolent programmes initiated by well-meaning (if not totally disinterested) organizations. Even when they have over-stressed the issue of violence, one may view beneath it an admirable passion for human rights, dignity, and an 'atmosphere' for love. Illustrating the often-misunderstood roots of the language of conflict, Gutierrez quotes Che Guevara: love is "the guiding principle" of revolution.

> Let me say, with the risk of appearing ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of love. It is impossible to think of an authentic revolutionary without this quality...In these conditions the revolutionary leaders must have a large dose of humanity, a large dose of a sense of justice and truth, to avoid falling into dogmatic extremes,

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1. Jesus' commandment to "love one another" is not a "commandment of mutual love". It is a commandment to each to love each, unconditionally. Mutuality is not logically the responsibility of one person, and is not therefore capable of being obeyed by an individual. If the command is taken collectively, it is still dependent upon each individual's unconditional love. If the commandment were indeed "mutual love" each individual would be absolved of his responsibility if his love were not reciprocated.

> into cold scholasticism, into isolation from the masses. They must struggle every day so that their love of living humanity is transformed into concrete deeds, into acts that will serve as an example, as a mobilizing factor.[1]

We do not know, nor can we easily guess, the context of jesus' saying: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force." (Matt 11:12)[2] His statement may be an indication of the militancy associated with the expectation of the messiah, or it may be an ironic and saddened reference to misunderstandings about his mission. In the passion of expectation, all human beings are subject to extremes of misinterpretation. The Latin American theologians, despite their passion for liberation, have too often failed to distinguish between necessary violence and unnecessary cruelty, between civil disobedience and civil war, between transforming practice and despairing suicide, fratricide, and, adopting Dussel's implication, "theocide". Perhaps it is no coincidence that the same chapter, in which we find Jesus' one reference to violence, ends with his famous comfort for the poor: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. "(Matt. 11:29). The Jesus we see in the Gospels is certainly not apolitical, uncritical, nor does he avoid conflict. But he tells us in no uncertain terms that the poor inherit the Kingdom, for that is where God takes his stand. The meek and the gentle shall inherit the earth, for they may survive to see the Kingdom established there, while "all who take the sword will perish by the sword."

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1. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 98; quoting Che Guevara, Venceremos! MacMillan, New York, 1968, p. 396
2. The Lukan parallel does not help us to decipher this logion from "Q". Luke is intentionally ambiguous, perhaps even facetious, as Jesus may have been originally. Luke attenuates the emphasis upon violence as such, implying that the law and the prophets are no guarantee for entry into the Kingdom, and everyone must "force" his way in. (cf. Luke 16:16).

Segundo's description of inevitable violence is more extreme than most of the liberation views. His interpretation, however, is generally representative of the manner in which liberation theologians have tended to highlight the idea of violence, often based upon rather arbitrary and somewhat biased exegetical distinctions. Despite the fact that one may certainly find violence in the texts, the greater impact of the Christian message leads toward its diminuition, and certainly not toward its legitimation.

3. God in the Neighbour

A common equation in Latin American theology of liberation is that between the love of God and authentic human love. I noted above Gutierrez' subtle reference to Feuerbach's idea of love and the latter's assertion that human love is divine. Gutierrez, without adopting Feuerbach's negation of God for the sake of love, has declared that God cannot be loved except as one loves his neighbour. "To love one's brother, to love all men, is a necessary and indispensable mediation of the love of God; it is to love God."[1] "We find the Lord in our encounters with men, especially the poor, marginated and exploited ones. An act of love towards them is an act of love towards God."[2] Gutierrez does not see this mediation of God's love and love for God as a horizontalist displacement of the love of God as a Christian concept in both genitive and objective forms. In loving other persons we display God's love toward them, while at the same time 'materially' loving God. Human love for God conceived in this fashion does not depend upon the faith of the lover, for Gutierrez says that since "everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God" (I John 4:7), love for God is "unavoidably expressed through love of one's neighbour". Apart from its mediation through

1. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 200
2. ibid. p. 201

the human love for others, however, "the love of God is an illusion". For Gutierrez, this way of conforming to Jesus' dual commandment is underwritten by Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan and confirmed by the story of the Sheep and the Goats (cf. Luke 10:25 ff; Matt. 25:31 ff.).

Gutierrez tells us that in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus' surprising answer to the question 'Who is my neighbour?' indicates that the neighbour is not he whom I find in my path, but rather he in whose path I place myself and actively seek. The neighbourly love required by Jesus of his disciples is active in such a way that it seeks out the suffering neighbour, and in him discovers God. This, says Gutierrez, is the way we "encounter God in history". "If humanity, each man, is the living temple of God, we meet God in our encounter with men; we encounter him in the commitment to the historical process of mankind."[1] But the neighbour cannot be deemed merely an 'occasion' for access to God. The love which is required is for the human being himself, and not for the love of God. "That my action towards another is at the same time an action towards God does not detract from its truth and concreteness, but rather gives it even greater meaning and import."[2] Also, Gutierrez stresses, the idea of "neighbour" is not merely an individual concept; the term refers to the whole fabric of social relations, including "economic, social, cultural, and racial co-ordinates". It goes far beyond the limitations of the individualistic encounter between I and thou. Quoting Pope Pius XII, Gutierrez claims that "charity today is a political charity", and must be directed against the private ownership of the means of production. The hungry must be filled with good things, and the rich sent empty away.

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1. ibid. p. 194
2. ibid. p. 202

Picking up a thread which has concerned us throughout our discussion of love, Gutierrez claims that love is only authentic when it is spontaneous. Only "gratuitous love" goes to our very roots and elicits true love. Here the idea of spontaneity is specifically identified with God's grace, his "gratuitousness". To this extent Gutierrez' idea of love resembles Nygren's view of agape as God's unconditional love "infused" into human beings, and which therefore must not be willed, obeyed, or coerced into life. For Gutierrez, "there is a real love only when there is free giving without conditions or coercion."[1] Gutierrez specifically says that a charity which is enacted "out of duty" is "a fleshless charity and therefore non-existent".[2] His ground for such a statement is exegetically derived. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus says that the Samaritan's "heart melted" with compassion, causing him to minister to the injured man on the other side of the road. The priest and Levite, however, had duties to obey the law. Spontaneity ruled over duty. One must allow oneself to be "moved with compassion" for the oppressed and the suffering if love is to resemble the love of Jesus and become liberative.

Following Karl Rahner, Gutierrez, Dussel, Sobrino, and Boff have stressed the idea of "the Sacrament of the Neighbour". There is a "palpable transcendence" of human love whenever the neighbour is loved for his or her own sake. Love for one's neighbour constitutes access to God; conversion to the neighbour "and in him to the Lord" is the liberationists' idea of faith. For Dussel, Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan is an answer to the question "Who is God?". The Samaritan's ministry to his neighbour is the theological antithesis of Cain's murder of his brother. The "locus" of God is one's neighbour.[3] Love for the neighbour entails not only ministry

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1. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 206
2. ibid. p. 200
3. Enrique Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. pp. 18 ff; p. 169

to him or her but also recognizing the neighbour's rights.[1] Worship apart from a practical love for one's neighbour does not exist.[2]

As we have seen, Segundo seems to confuse love for one's neighbour with "mutual love". Dussel, however, distinguishes between the two, in saying that a "face-to-face encounter with the neighbour" constitutes authentic love.

> Face to face, mouth to mouth, is the fundamental experience through which I respect the Other as other, I love the Other as other; it is agape. Charity is not merely friendship among brothers, because then it would be a totalized we, a house tightly closed. It would not be charity, love for the Other as other, for John says, "He first loved us." The one who loves first does not yet have friendship, because to love the Other as other comes before the love is returned. Friendship is mutual well-wishing, allowing us to be self-centred. To love the other without receiving the other's love is not mutual well-wishing, but pure well-wishing toward the Other. It does not matter whether the Other reciprocates; I love that person for himself; only this makes it possible for that person to love me someday. This is how friendship really comes about. Charity is not merely comradeship; it is love freely given.[3]

Dussel's "Other/other" language is apparently an attempt to systematize the idea that God is transcendent and immanent in the neighbour, "the other". (It may not be coincidental that Dussel's work often reminds us of Hegel and Feuerbach.) Dussel eschews the idea of self-love as the measure of one's love for the neighbour. His interpretation of ethics concludes that "loving your neighbour is the whole law. We mean, of course, not 'loving your neighbour as yourself', but 'as I have loved you.' To love 'as I have loved you' is to lay down one's life. Those persons are Christian who day by day see the other as meriting their service even to the point of laying down their life."[4] Dussel's stringent interpretation of love for the neighbour shows it to be "...charity, agape: it

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1. ibid. p. 46
2. Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, op. cit. p. 167; (inter alia)
3. Enrique Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 20. Dussel here tries to drive a wedge between mutual love and agape, but seems also to exclude friendship from agape. This interpretation is rather too much like Nygren's, despite its good intentions.
4. ibid. p. 172. cf. John 15:13:"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends". Dussel takes the martyrdom or sacrifice literally, but seems to divorce it from friendship.and appropriate self-love.

is a revealed concept found only in Judaeo-Christianity, the most revolutionary approach to love in all history."[1] Neighbour-love as agape is extended to entail liberation in erotic love, especially regarding the relationships between men and women and the liberation of the latter from oppression and exploitation by men.[2] It also includes "pedogogical liberation", of the child from cultural domination.[3]

Although Dussel's insight is not necessarily typical of the liberation authors, his creative extension of the liberative capacity of love to include global problems demonstrates a potentially universal application of themes related to love which have been fashioned in the 'critical heat' of Latin American theology and the Latin American situation. His distinction between mutuality and the love of neighbour needs to be stressed in light of Segundo's pragmatism and a general tendency toward the appearance of exclusivism in favour of the poor of Latin America, and possibly against the poor of other countries.[4] Nevertheless, his reservations about "as yourself" may be unjustified. To love one's neighbour as oneself does not necessarily entail the presupposition of egotism. Agape may indeed be "a revolutionary approach to love", but it is not clear that "it is a revealed concept found only in Judaeo-Christianity". Several Eastern religions are conversant with an idea of love for the neighbour which does not find its basis either in a written code or in a particular manifestation of the deity. Neither is it so often debated.

Protestants will continue to be suspicious of the equation between the love of God and human love. My own opinion is that

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1. ibid. p. 21
2. ibid. pp. 56 ff.
3. ibid. p. 58; cf. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, trans. Myra Ramos, Penguin, Middlesex, England, 1972.
4. Hugo Assmann, for example, talks about "a love that stays comfortably at home". cf. Assmann, Practical Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 7. Ellacuria complains that there are "too many branches on the tree of liberation." cf. Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 127

the equation has more to offer us than to repel us. As I have suggested regarding the equation between "knowing God" and "doing justice", it is probably more correct to say that the second demonstrates the first. Similarly with regard to the dual commandment to love God and the neighbour, I would suggest that it is exegetically 'proper' to say that the love of neighbour demonstrates one's love for God.[1] Nevertheless, as the liberation theologians have so often stressed, the accent is on the genuine love for one's neighbour.

The neighbour, interpreted biblically, must include friends, strangers, orphans, widows, children, stepmothers, the handicapped, black, red, yellow, and brown, as well as white folk. It must indeed include the poor, but it may also include the rich who are so often victims of their own oppression. The neighbour must include one's wife or husband, one's fellow citizen, and, yes, one's neighbour (literally) next door, while not excluding the obnoxious drunk, the politician not of one's party, and the brain-washed soldier, effecting machismo and implying masochism. The neighbour is 'them wha's not like us', the 'enemy', who today is conceived as 'gay', 'Communist', 'punk', 'student ', 'academic', and 'bourgeoisie'. Although the Latin American theologians have often expressed the universal character of the love of neighbour (Segundo excepted), I have a suspicion that the universality is limited, necessarily perhaps, to those of a particular social stratification. If the "locus" of God is found in the neighbour, but there is a practical limitation of 'neighbours', there may be a 'reduction' of God.

Boff is every bit as oriented toward the neighbour as the other Latin American theologians. Quoting Clement of Alexandria, he tells us: "If you have really found your brother, you have found

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1. This conclusion is also demanded by our 'thesis': "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Dwell in my love. You will dwell in my love if you keep my commandments". (John 15:9-10). i.e. Love precedes justice; God's love is prior to human love; Love of God informs but is not limited by human love. Intimacy does not imply equivalency between divine and human love.

your God as well."[1] Nevertheless, he asserts, "No concrete historical reality can exhaust the riches of Christ. Hence no title conferred on Christ can be absolutized."[2]

> But we have here a reduction of Christ to only one aspect of his message: love of neighbour. We believe that love is central and also essential to Jesus' preaching. His message, however, is much wider and promises the total liberation of human beings and the cosmos for God. Love is the atmosphere in which this is hoped for, lived, proclaimed. We would, however, prefer to be on the side of the oppressed, who at least learnt this from the Gospel, than to be on the side of those who fanatically affirm the totality of orthodoxy but tolerate the injustice and barbarities that surround them and have lost the capacity to hear Christ's words: when you have done this to one of these little ones, you have done it to me.[3]

For Boff, the Latin American emphasis upon love of neighbour and service to the poor is one aspect of the significance of Christ, contributing to but not exhausting Jesus' proclamation and assurance of the coming kingdom of God. In his later book, Liberating Grace, Boff shows this kingdom to be allied with beauty, truth, and many types of love yet to be imagined and realized in history. Boff is willing to ask the question which many liberation theologians have yet to consider: after the liberation of the poor, what happens next? Nevertheless, the poor are always with us, and attention to their plight has too long been delayed.

4. Love and Justice

"Liberation," asserts Ignacio Ellacuria, "is a process of liberty, justice, and love."[4] Liberty, justice, and love are deemed essential to the proclamation of the Gospel; in history the Gospel's credibility depends upon "the struggle against injustice and the facilitation of love".[5] Such emotive language is common throughout

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1. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 245
2. ibid. p. 230
3. ibid. p. 231
4. Ignacio Ellacuria, Freedom Made Flesh, op. cit. p. 85
5. ibid. p. 109

the liberation literature, but only rarely are terms like love, justice, liberation, "praxis", "the oppressed", "utopia", "the kingdom of God", and "the poor" specifically described so that we are certain of context and interpretation. The Latin Americans may rightly criticize Europeans for their obsession with language, meaning, and logic. On the other hand, when the Latin Americans attempt to clarify exactly what they mean by such terms, distinctions are often revealed which intimate severe communication problems, not only between the North and the South, but possibly also within the Latin American context. I have already noted that there is an important difference between Latin American and European Protestant interpretations of grace. The ubiquitous term "praxis" would be properly understood in Europe as a technical Marxist word implying the dialectical relationship between historical activity and flexible theory conditioned by the former. In Latin America it is unclear what the term "praxis" means, but often, it is safe to say, it becomes a synonym for sheer activity, and would best be translated by the normal English word "practice." Yet we must attempt to discover the meaning of such phrases as "a praxis of the poor", "a praxis of justice", and "the praxis of love," more through sympathy and intuition than by concise definitions. For in the end we are dealing with an attempt to give compassionate expression to real human problems, and not with a sterile set of categories.

"The love of justice," says Dussel, "is the first liberating virtue of the praxis of liberation."[1] Such a statement is ambiguous, to say the least, but in Dussel's case we do have the rudiments of an explanation for the terms 'love' and 'justice'. I have already noted Dussel's clarification of authentic love as agape, unique and superior to mutual love.[2] Dussel's interpretation of justice

1. Enrique Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 46
2. ibid. p. 20 (cf. above, p.362)

is, I think, roughly equivalent to its meaning as normally construed by most of the other liberation theologians. By tracing his development of the idea of justice, we may have a fair notion of what justice means in the Latin American theology of liberation.

Dussel begins with a historical analysis of the exploitation of South America by Europe. He concludes that present-day Europe was largely built with the gold, blood, and sweat of Latin American Indians. The "original sin" of colonial domination and cultural imperialism has produced ever-greater injustice on the Latin American continent. Latin America as well as Europe and North America are immersed in the results of "the sin of theft". The products of the workers in the South were stolen by the North, and the "inheritance" of the wealth in the hands of the North and their cohorts in the South constitutes more theft.[1] The work of justice begins with the word of "the prophet" to "the poor": "You are blessed, and yours is the Kingdom." The poor must be led to create their own justice, the rights and property which rightfully are theirs. The oppressors too must be liberated, but the "subjugators" must be dispossessed in order to be saved. Dussel then conceives of a just war of the oppressed against their oppressors.

> When the oppressed people lift up their heads, with a will to freedom and love for the future, not hatred, war begins. In war not all are corrupt. Unjust indeed will be the army of the subjugators and just the army that defends itself in war and fights for liberation.[2]

Dussel tells us elsewhere that "the poor person is the just person", for he is, even in his injustice, the victim of the injustice of others.[3] "Justice," says Dussel, "means giving to all people what is due to them."[4] "Justice is not merely the offer of bread, but of more just laws."[5] Affirming a "natural right to private property", he tells us that "natural" means "things like calories, protein, clothing, housing, etc."[6] Nevertheless he notes that "the

1. Enrique Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. pp. 25 ff.
2. ibid. p. 43
3. ibid. p. 71
4. ibid. p. 46
5. ibid. p. 47
6. ibid. p. 49

excessive and unjust accumulation of juridical private property is an offshoot of original sin, of the death of Abel, of the disobedience of Adam", and it is at the root of subjugation of peoples in Latin America.[1] As I observed above, Dussel is more thorough than many of the liberationists in applying the motif of justice to I- thou relationships, particularly to relations between men and women. "All other relationships," he says, "have their basis in this erotic relationship."[2] Each human relationship entails either respect for or domination of the other, and the context and extent of justice is determined by the respect of a "face-to-face encounter". But, like the other theologians of liberation from Latin America, Dussel's main emphasis upon justice is associated with the rights of the poor. For him such an emphasis can only be fashioned "from the periphery".

> Really to hear God is to hear him through someone who, from outside the system, tells me that the system is not the only possible one, that there can be another. Only when I become aware that the system is not divine can I hear divinity as exteriority. Only when I am able to comprehend the finiteness, the historicity, the inevitable coming to an end at any moment of the system in which I find myself...can I hear the Word of God that calls me from the future. This Word is not abstract but is a summons to me on the part of the poor who cry out to me, in effect: "Do justice! because we have rights that are not yours. We have rights that arise in us and not in you. We do not ask that you give us what is yours but that you give us what is ours, starting with our worth as persons." If I recognize that word, I will be recognizing the Word of God.[3]

One cannot be sure exactly what rights the poor may have which are not those of everyone. To assert such too strongly may be tantamount to Outka's "blank check" malfunction of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as they would have you do unto them." Nevertheless, as Dussel suggests, justice must include the recognition of the rights of others, just as love must include the bestowal of those rights without coercion.

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1. ibid. pp. 49-50
2. Enrique Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 55
3. ibid. p. 92

A similar interpretation is found in Miranda's work. Miranda tells us that "the supreme charity is to recognize the right of the person being given to".[1] Only with such a recognition, he says, does love gain its authenticity distinct from " a humiliating paternalism". "If it is not equivalent to saying 'you have a complete right to this and I am not condescending in any way,' then not even the genuine love between man and woman is able to transcend."[2] Miranda as well as many of the other liberationists asserts that genuine love of neighbour is "transcendent" because in such a love "there is a depth that man does not suspect; it is through it that man encounters God."[3] However, this divine encounter depends upon the justice allied with the love, for "love is not love without a passion for justice."

According to Miranda and Gutierrez, the biblical concept of love is not to be distinguished from the biblical concept of justice. "The love that the Bible knows is love-justice."[4] I have noted Miranda's interpretation of the Old Testament concept hesed (mercy, compassion) and its connection to the terms mispat (justice) and sedakah, (righteousness) which for him implies that love and justice are in fact the same thing. "One of the most disastrous errors in the history of Christianity is to have tried - under the influence of Greek definitions - to distinguish between love and justice."[5] For Miranda, "the sense of justice is the only love..." which is able to reflect the priorities of the kingdom of God as a "utopia" on earth.[6] Miranda has traced these Old Testament terms to the sayings of Jesus, so that the New Testament idea of agape is to be construed by the Old Testament idea of hesed; thus when Paul speaks of "a love poured into human hearts" he means God's justice/

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1. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 62 (quoting Bigo)
2. ibid.
3. Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 238
4. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 62
5. ibid. p. 61
6. ibid. p. 62

compassion, as "glory", at work through human love. Similarly, Miranda has shown the important affinity of Jesus' command to love the neighbour as oneself with the summation of the Leviticus justice-statements (Lev. 19). Although I cannot agree that love for God is logically equivalent to doing justice, I must respect the intimate alliance between human love and human justice which Miranda has exegetically illustrated, but I doubt they should be equated.

Whereas Miranda draws his equation of love and justice from the Bible, most of the liberation theologians seem to imply a phenomenological or ethical base for the equation, which is indeed broadly assumed in the literature. Bonino's quotation from Paul Ricoeur may have something to do with the wide acceptance of the equivalency between love and justice.

> We show little or no understanding of love when we make charity the counterpart and supplement of, or the substitute for, justice; love is coextensive with justice; it is its soul, its impulse, its deep motivation; it lends it its vision, which is the other, the absolute value of which it testifies.[1]

Ricoeur says specifically that love equals justice. (The same idea is also, incidentally, to be found in the ethics of Joseph Fletcher.)[2] But if we are truly to understand the meaning of justice, it cannot be merely translated as love, which actually has no universally agreed meaning, and which is subject to diverse interpretations even in the liberation literature. It may be helpful to interpret love through reference to justice, but as I have shown, justice is capable of almost as many interpretations as love. In other words, the statement "love equals justice" does not really tell us much.

It is helpful to discover, however, that the concept of justice in the liberation literature is <u>essentially</u> a positive and dynamic

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1. Jose Miguez Bonino, <u>Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age</u>, op. cit. p. 113 (quoting Paul Ricoeur)
2. cf. Joseph Fletcher, <u>Situation Ethics</u>, SCM Press, London, 1966 (Chapter 5)

concept, unlimited by the assumption of "order", not initially directed toward punishment or vengeance, certainly not a synonym for divine retribution, but rather a concept which is closely allied with equality of persons before God and the foundations of peace. The idea of equality of persons is particularly important for grasping the liberation idea of justice.

Miranda and Santa Ana document the early Christian attempts to build a community based upon equality of persons. Santa Ana notes that although the idea remained, the communist vision of Acts 4:32 ff. was rarely realized. Miranda observes how the concern for equality is to be seen in patristic thought. Jerome tells us that the rich person is either an unjust person or the heir of one. Ambrose says that all excess belongs to the poor. Thomas Aquinas, more influenced by the development of feudal society, stresses the responsibility that goes with ownership (procurare et dispensare). The right of ownership implies the ability to care for and distribute to those who are dependent upon the means of production. Modern industry has lost this ability, so there is an implicit confluence of Marxist thought and Christianity. Class struggle becomes "a means for obtaining more justice".[1] (As Dom Helder Camara proclaims, "My socialism is justice.")

Miranda observes that the norm of equality, which he believes should be represented in all laws, is particularly expressed by the "as yourself" in Jesus' commandment of love. "As yourself" is not the egotistic motivation, rather the "measure" for one's love for the neighbour.[2] It entails an apprehension of equality before God, as well of the neighbour's rights. The equality and justice of the dual commandment is undergirded and in fact repeated by the Golden Rule. To do unto others as we would have others do unto

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1. Jose Miguez Bonino, Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age, op. cit. p. 119
2. Jose P. Miranda, Marx and the Bible, op. cit. p. 63

us is a positive and active expression of justice which is negatively imposed by legal statute. "As yourself" is the key to a just love in both sayings of Jesus, because in each the idea of equality of persons is given active expression. As Miranda concludes, the love which Jesus commands is to be characterized by "an acute, interiorized sense of justice".[1]

As far as justice is related to the idea of law, there is the general affirmation by almost all the authors that love fulfills the whole law. (Gal. 5:14). Boff, perhaps, puts it best:

> Jesus comports himself as one higher than the laws. If the laws help the human person, increase love, or make love possible, he accepts them. If on the contrary, they legitimate enslavement, he repudiates them and demands that they be broken. It is not the law which saves but love. In this we have a summary of the ethical preaching of Jesus.[2]

But Boff goes farther than the rest, for while asserting that Jesus demands that laws be broken, he also stresses that "the love he preaches must be unconditional, both for friends and enemies". Jesus "does not pay back in the same coin". He is not "against" anyone; if he is against it is only because he is "in favour of" in the first place. "He is first in favour of love, justice, reconciliation, hope, and total realization of the meaning of human existence in God."[3] Jesus' "justice" is characterized as "total openness to others and the Great Other, indiscriminate love, unshakeable fidelity to the voice of conscience, and the overcoming of whatever chains human beings to their own egoism".[4] Boff gives "concrete form" to the positive and hopeful idea of justice in Latin American theology of liberation, which, if not totally identical with love, is certainly not far away.

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1. ibid. p. 293
2. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. p. 67
3. ibid. p. 239
4. ibid. p. 250

> God is, therefore, not far from us. He is our greatest depth. In Jesus, God appeared in a concrete form, assuming our human condition. Hence each human being reminds us of the human being who was Jesus. To accept a poor person as poor is to accept the poor Jesus. He hides himself, he is incognito, behind each human face. Faith demands that we look profoundly into the face of our brothers and sisters; love them; give them food, drink, and clothing; visit them in prison. For in doing so, we are being host to and serving Christ himself. Hence the human being is the greatest manifestation not only of God, but also of Christ resurrected in our world...
>
> Now we know, only through faith, that the Lord is present in each human being. With our own resurrection, which will be like that of Christ, we will see and enjoy, enjoy and love, love and understand our brotherhood with Jesus incarnate and resurrected.[1]

Justice, after all, is not to be conceived or imagined in the restrictive categories which we often apply to it, but rather by a broad and practical application to successive historical claims for dignity, equality, and peace. Whenever justice takes the character of law, the law must be flexible enough to realize that it is only the servant of justice, through which it may create the possibilities for a love which, in turn, creates justice.

Despite Dussel's assertion that "the poor person is the just person", we must be cautious. Since Jesus' commandment to love the neighbour as oneself comes from Leviticus, he was no doubt acquainted with the strict command, which, among others, is summed up by the command to love one's neighbour: "You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbour." (Lev. 19:15). The same command, incidentally, draws a distinction between "the poor" and "the great", but both of them are "the neighbour".

The same chapter in Leviticus also contains another verse which Jesus knew, and by which he interpreted the concept of "neighbour". "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Lev. 19:33). Although

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1. Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, op. cit. pp. 218-219

Miranda has noticed the connection between Jesus' command and the summation of the justice code at Lev. 19:18 ("You shall love your neighbour as yourself"), he and many of the other liberationists have missed the interpretation of the neighbour as the alien in Lev. 19:33. In general, the justice which is claimed is legitimate and long-overdue justice for the poor. But Christ's apprehension of justice, as Boff has shown, is much greater, and must be extended toward all, indiscriminately, unconditionally, in alliance with his love. Thus, perhaps, the alleged domination of South America by the North may not be reduced to the justice of the former and the injustice of the latter. And, in terms of international justice, what may have been lost through impotence and ignorance cannot be justly reclaimed by the impulsive abuse of military power, not by salting old wounds.

I cannot agree that love is equivalent to justice, although the direction of our whole 'thesis' assumes that love is intimately related to and helps to create justice. I do agree that justice is generally to be construed in terms of equality. Nevertheless, equality alone is not a great enough principle to completely enclose the hesed (mercy) of the Old Testament and the agape (love) of the New. Nygren was wrong to oppose love to justice according to the story of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16). Nevertheless, in every assumption of equality, particularly as it is incorporated into legal systems, there is a place for mercy. The idea of equality does not exhaust the biblical idea of justice. Socialism, however, conceived in flexible forms and continuously related to the kingdom of God through the ethics of Jesus, may well, as Helder Camara hopes, one day incorporate many of the themes of justice which the New Testament proclaims.[1] Nevertheless, God's justice cannot be reduced totally to any conception of humanity.

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1. cf. Jose de Broucker, Dom Helder Camara, The Violence of a Peacemaker, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1970...; For example: "From each according to his ability; to each according to his need."

CONSTRUCTIVE CONCLUSION

The "Love" of Latin American Theology of Liberation

"Charity," says Gutierrez," is God's love in us and does not exist outside our human capabilities to love and to build a just and brotherly world." [1] We must conclude that to a great extent, Gutierrez and his colleagues are certainly correct. Their view of love may be too optimistic about humanity and too reductive of God, but it rests on a biblical "hope".

Liberation theology has had the courage to talk about love in terms which cannot be delimited by philosophical systems, ethical criteria, ecclesiastical tradition, or social convention. It is impossible to characterize the "love" of Latin American theology of liberation in a few sentences, or even in a few categories. Consistent with the diversity of the term, it has received diverse applications, yet almost always allied with "the love of justice" as Dussel so ambiguously characterizes the love which liberates. In the holistic struggles of human beings to find justice, freedom, and peace, the theological notion of love must certainly be located. The innovative adaptation of an idea of grace which does not draw a clear division between God and humanity gives a hopeful character to human nature, despite its immersion in the tragedy of sin. So far as Cain learns to be his brother's keeper he may realize that he is 'created in God's image', for his insistence upon freedom, his capacity to love, and his refusal to be determined by history tell him so.

In close affinity with the idea of a latent divinity in human nature, the Latin Americans have not been afraid to look again at the atheistic theories which have, at the possible expense of God, certainly 'enlightened' the character of humanity. Ludwig Feuerbach,

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1. Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, op. cit. p. 199

Karl Marx, and other great thinkers about humanity have been adapted, if not adopted, to inform and suggest practical applications of the spiritual concept of the kingdom of God. In this ambitious synthesis, the charity which is revealed is certainly one which is possible to humankind, in this world, and just as imminent as it was first conceived in Galilee. Jesus' love is nothing if not optimistic.

But through and despite all this optimism about human nature, the weight and nature of sin continues to exert its force. We must finally ask Latin American theology whether its "hope" is really hopeful enough to be able to battle sin on all its fronts. Although there is no justification for perpetuating the doctrine of the total depravity of human nature, the extent to which, in fact, human history has been a record of depravity must not be overlooked if liberation and justice are really theology's concern. A vision of "utopia" may not, finally, be realizable through a practice based upon social, economic, and historical analysis. The kingdom of God may not, finally, be reducible to a vision of economic or social equality. The proletariat and the poor do not, simply by these designations, automatically inherit all the perfections, "which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard", lying in store for those that increasingly learn what it means to love God and the neighbour as oneself. A hope which rests secure among the poor and the oppressed may tend to gloss over the injustice which one poor person may perpetrate upon another. A hope which overlooks the extent to which sin "lurks at the door" of the victim, the effect of his own selfishness, envy, and anger, may not be able to recognize liberation when it is imminent. Somehow, the poor person must discover a kind of liberation which is present even in the depths of slavery, even when the oppressor's chains are still attached.

Piety is no longer an 'acceptable' word; the love of the poor person for his or her God reeks of paternalism and sublimated

servility; the quiet acceptance of God's will in the midst of suffering suggests a theology of despair and determinism. Yet the sense in which religion has through the ages been a positive and nourishing "opiate of the people" cannot be too quickly dismissed. Ludwig Feuerbach, who originally coined this term, was able to recognize the succour that religion may bring to the suffering, even though such piety may well be an expression of social tragedy. If love for a God who loves us when humans do not is an "opiate", then perhaps we need such a drug to sustain us, while praying the fervent prayer of the Psalmist: "How long O Lord?" - or better still, of the Christian martyr: "Maranatha! Come, O Lord!"

I do not think that this "opiate", this piety, is finally antithetical to the concerns of Latin American theology of liberation. Indeed, Leonardo Boff has admirably shown how a love <u>for</u> Jesus may be preserved through an active yet non-violent expression of Jesus' love, at work through human love for the neighbour, for friends, for family, and for enemies. But finally, love for God, or for the person of Jesus Christ, may not be totally expressed in 'horizontal' loves. The records left by the great mystics, especially of the Roman Catholic orders, resist reductions which attempt to dispose of the traditions of piety, contemplation, and 'vertical' worship. There is an analogy here which may be expressed in the relationship of bread to work. Without nourishment there can be no creative energy. But if one only lives to eat, then creativity suffers and obesity results. Bread and work are intimately related, but they are not quite reducible to the same thing, nor can the one authentically be entertained without the other. After all, it takes work to make bread, just as it takes bread to make work. This simple analogy cannot say it all, but it implies a great deal. Human beings are more than the sum of their parts, and any implicit reduction of human nature to practical or material entities is likely to be unsatisfactory in the long run. Similarly, the kingdom of God does

not seem to be essentially definable in any list of components. Its immanence is indeed to be affirmed, but not at the expense of its transcendence.

If liberation theology aspires to encourage the saints to take up their crosses in "following Jesus", then it must find ways of affirming the ultimate hope which has encouraged Christian martyrs since the earliest persecutions. The apostles of the early Church did not attempt to reassure the victims of persecution by telling them that there was justice in their cause, nor that their poverty was their key to heaven. The hope in Christian eschatology has always been grounded upon a greater justice than that achieved or achievable in history. The justice, in this sense, has nothing to do with merit, equality, or work, but in spite of every martyr's limitations, shortcomings, omissions, and mistakes, can only be consummated as "justification". The exploiter and victim, the oppressed and oppressor, the willing and the unwilling martyr have this justice in common at the end of the day. It does not depend upon riches or poverty in this world, nor upon faith or the lack of it, for it can only be a justice which is created for "each according to his need". Eschatology must have a place for the 'dead'. Upon this 'place' Christian hope is founded, and by it ultimate justice, liberation, and love shall be determined. Without such a hope, our vision of justice and liberation here may be an illusion, and theology which calls itself "good news for the poor" is no better and no worse than an innocuous hallucinogen by which we pass the time.

The kingdom of God, therefore, must entail this sense of justice which is not conditioned by history nor, so far, achievable by human beings within it. If God is love, and if love is "the soul of justice," as the Medellín bishops affirmed, then God can never be 'absent' from the human condition, within history or beyond it. God's wrath may indeed be an expression of his love, but his wrath cannot entail his absence. The allusion of Miranda and Gutierrez to such an event-

uality is a denial of the Covenant, both the "old" one and the "new". Finally, if we see Jesus as the fulfilment of the Decalogue and the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31, the kingdom of God must be construed in intimate relation to God's continued Covenant with his people. It does not begin with Jesus, nor does it finish with his death; it does not exclude history, but transforms and transcends it; it is not only good news to the poor, but also liberation and ultimate justice for all. The universality of the Covenant and the kingdom of God cannot finally be interpreted in terms of history, class-struggle, or a vindication of the oppressed. Justice cannot finally be conceived theologically without reference to God's capacity to "justify" and redeem both oppressor and oppressed.

If "love is the soul of justice", then Latin American theology of liberation is inconsistent in drawing an equation between love and justice. Visions of justice vary in this world; quite possibly they are generally based upon some primal sense of human relationships experienced in authentic meetings of one person with another, or an "I-thou" encounter. If this is so, then justice may be a phenomenological derivative of feelings which we call love. Similarly, love and the experience of justice which it often facilitates, precedes and informs such changing "justice structures" as civilization is able to formalize and institute in successive societies. In the experience of love and authentic feeling between the I and the thou, there may be a kind of "justitia originalis" which constantly shapes our juridical systems, guiding as well as criticizing them. This notion that there could be in the experience of love a 'vision' of original justice must be further explored in the following chapter. But in relation to Latin American theology of liberation, the constructive suggestion may be offered that if love is made the logical equivalent of justice, then the effect may be the limitation of love to whatever partial or contingent sense of justice that may be deemed possible or prevalent at any given moment. As we have

observed, love cannot be exhausted by the idea of equality. If love is "the soul of justice", then, it appears, love is also prior to justice. Through the practice of love, justice might facilitate greater love, and in turn, even greater justice.

Finally, the love which we are able to consciously think and imagine may only be the tip of the iceberg. Taken literally, the Feuerbachian inversion of "love is God" only begins to intimate the creative possibilities of a love interpreted <u>essentially</u> by its epiphany in human life. The 'sacrament' of love for one's neighbour may be a profound 'intuition' which symbolises, without exhausting, "what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ...though it is beyond knowledge" (Eph. 3:18-19). Such an 'intuition', Paul suggests, may lead humanity to "the fullness of being, the fullness of God himself."

The next chapter will explore further.

CHAPTER SIX

EROS: PROCLAIMED, MAIMED, REDEEMED

The Idea of Love in the Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead

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THE IDEA OF LOVE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

Topical Survey

EROS: PROCLAIMED, MAIMED, REDEEMED

After the formidable critique and solid challenge of Latin American theology of liberation, it may seem inappropriate to wander off into the metaphysics of the philosophy of process. Latin American theologians are certainly justified in their complaint that northern theologians often retreat behind a barrier of 'academic' terms while a suffering humanity cries for justice, food, shelter, and an absence of war which might make true peace possible. There is indeed a sense in which the 'first world' lies captive to its intellectual machinery.

Yet, the arguments which have so often been used to vindicate imperialism and exploitation may, with better arguments, be shown to be faulty. As Alfred North Whitehead has illustrated, John Wesley's death-bed petition to Lord Wilberforce for the abolition of the slave trade capped a persistent career dedicated to the power of persuasion, enlightened and effected through the integration of religion, philosophy, and law, for the purpose of building a better world and a better humanity. The 'institutions' of religion, philosophy, and law - informed by science - still constitute the basis of civilized societies.[1] Despite their tendency to undergird the status quo, they are nevertheless subject to change. In such institutions change most often occurs through persistent questioning of their principles. Rarely in highly civilized societies has justice occurred through revolution. When violent upheaval has overturned the stabilizing institutions of a society, it is rarely evident that greater justice is created; often there is wide-spread suffering by the very people on whose behalf the revolution was supposedly conducted.

At any event, the concept of revolution is not directly translatable from age to age and from country to country. It is significant

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1. arguably, even for societies which are nominally 'Marxist'.

that what Marx and Engels envisioned for England was more nearly approximated in agrarian Russia. What may have worked in Cuba seems to require different interpretation in Mexico. Capitalism today is no longer what it was; ironically it is often allied with a collectivity of proletarian shareholders, including trade-unionists. The vast multi-national corporations, for better or for worse, have taken their place beside the more ancient institutions that maintain the fabric of the world. The 'purifying' isolationism of China and Albania is no longer feasible. Modern communication and economic systems have extended the socialist's maxim, "there is no such thing as a human individual", so that now it may be said that there is no such thing as an individual nation. More than ever in history, people and nations are dependent upon each other and upon the institutions which bring them together, from the village cooperative to the World Bank. Robert McAfee Brown has succinctly stated the dilemma: "Maybe small is beautiful, but bigness isn't going away."[1]

While human hearts occasionally 'melt', corporate and institutional ones must usually be convinced. A theology which is genuinely concerned about love and justice may not have the privilege of arbitrarily condemning contemporary institutions in favour of a kingdom of heaven whithout them. While they are certainly not to be absolutized or considered 'necessary' in their present forms, they may yet have the capacity to play a role in God's liberative purpose. An authentic historical analysis might discover that theology's sharpest tools have been those of critical insight and rational argument. Some liberation theologians might agree; nevertheless, they have not stressed often enough that a liberative love may be no less "effective" if it is rational, patient, and passionately "persuasive".

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1. Robert McAfee Brown, Creative Dislocation - The Movement of Grace, Abingdon, Nashville, 1980, pp. 97ff.

"Persuasion" and "persuasive love" are passwords to a body of literature which stemmed from the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. In 1924 he left a career as an English mathematician to develop his own approach to metaphysics in the United States. The "philosophy of process" as a holistic, anthropocentric, "natural theology" is seminally outlined in Whitehead's 1927-8 Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh, published in 1929 as Process and Reality. A further development of his thought is his 1933 Adventures of Ideas, exploring the relationship between human experience and the total process of civilization. Although Whitehead acknowledges the influence of Plato, Hume, Descartes, Henry Bergson, William James, and John Dewey, his own integration of mathematics, philosophy, science, cultural phenomena, history, art, psychology, and religion provides the broad parameters of his thought.

Many of Whitehead's ideas have been perpetuated in various forms by a host of modern authors. One of the most notable has been Charles Hartshorne, whose adaptation of process thought has been concerned with the development of a concept of God avoiding the "paradox" as a way of reconciling the illogical.[1] Daniel Day Williams' development of a process view of love, though important, cannot be treated here.[2] Others might be mentioned at various points, but given the diversity among process thinkers it will be impossible to characterize the field and range of their thinking about love, God, the universe, and the infinite integral experiences of humanity. For this reason I have chosen to concentrate upon Whitehead himself in an attempt to understand his thought about love in relation to humanity, to civilization, and finally to God.

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1. cf. especially Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1948, 1967; Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, Philosophers Speak of God, University of Chicago Press, 1953; Charles Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process, Free Press, Glencoe, III. 1953; Charles Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection, Open Court Publishing Co., La Salle, Illinois, 1962; On justice, cf. Charles Hartshorne, "Beyond Enlightened Self-Interest", in Harry James Cargas and Bernard Lee (editors), Religious Experience and Process Theology, Paulist Press, New York, 1976
2. cf. Daniel Day Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love, James Nisbet and Co., Ltd., Digswell Pl., Welwyn, Herts, 1968.

Whitehead's Holistic Approach to the Nature of Love

Whitehead's vision of the role of love in a continuous process of creation has not been rendered obsolete. On the contrary, contemporary thinkers are just beginning to explore the wider implications of his approach. His lack of dogmatic style, despite the use of numerous special concepts, has given his work a flexibility uncommon to many philosophers. He was convinced that education in the twentieth century should be an adequate preparation for the onslaught of "general novelty", and his work represents this conviction.[1] Beginning with human existence and experience, Whitehead proposed to relate the smallest particle, qualitatively, with the purpose and dynamics of the universe. Such an ambitious programme necessarily requires a certain amount of speculation, but Whitehead's speculation is meticulously derived from his previous analysis, and is therefore closely controlled. Whitehead implies that all innovation in history depends upon a certain amount of speculative imagination, of "foresight" as well as "insight"; phenomenological analysis alone is not enough.[2]

Based upon his close examination of the "experience" of a single "occasion" Whitehead hopes to suggest what is going on in the universe. In practical terms, the "experience" is that of humanity, and the "occasion" is any point along the line of that experience. From this Whitehead deduces that the whole universe must operate according to the same motivating and synthesizing force or forces which constitute the life and experience of individual and corporate humanity. In broad terms, the central factor in all this experience

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1. cf. Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, Cambridge University Press, 1933, p.118
2. Whitehead says that "human experience must not be over-intellectualized." Intelligence often "flourishes at the expense of wisdom." "The folly of intelligent people, clear-headed and narrow-visioned, has precipitated many catastrophes." "In some direction or other we must devote ourselves beyond what would be warranted by the analysis of pure reason." Although "praxis" is not Whitehead's God, neither is reason. cf. Adventures of Ideas, pp. 58-59, 138. (op. cit.)

is love. "The Eros of the universe" appears in an infinite number of forms to generate the continuous becoming of all life.[1]

1. The Nature of Eros

It is an irony of history that at almost exactly the same time that Anders Nygren was drawing his strict antithesis between Christian love and the idea of eros, Whitehead was attempting to reconcile a comprehensive concept of eros with the 'truth' inherent in Christianity. Also at about the same time, Sigmund Freud was developing his concept of eros. The emphases of each of these thinkers are with us yet, and the radical differences in their interpretations account for some of the confusion about the meaning of love today. Each of these men found the 'roots' of eros in the writings of Plato. Nygren's spiritually acquisitive eros stems, however, more from neo-platonist philosophy than from Plato himself. Freud's egotistic, pleasure oriented eros is partially platonic and partially his own synthesis derived from research into the unconscious drives of his clients.[2] Whitehead's notion of eros (Eros) assimilates, to some extent, the interpretations of both Nygren and Freud. For Whitehead, eros is, essentially, an élan vital, a life force, which is the driving energy, not only of human nature, but also of the whole universe. As such it includes both the selfish acquisitiveness and the ascendancy toward God which Nygren identified. It also resembles the "pleasure principle" of Freud which Whitehead conceives as an urge toward beauty. Since eros is indeed a creative principle for Whitehead, the drives toward procreation are not to be excluded

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1. ibid. pp. 13, 256
2. cf. Douglas N. Morgan, Love: Plato, the Bible and Freud, Prentice-Hall, Inglewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964; and Rollo May, Love and Will, W.W. Norton and Co., New York, 1969. Freud himself held that "the Eros of the philosopher Plato coincides exactly with the love-force, the libido, of psychoanalysis." Morgan, however, states that "The truth is that Freudian love is very nearly the obverse of Platonic love." (cf. Morgan, p.173, May, p. 87)

from it. Very briefly, we might characterize Whitehead's notion of eros as the primeval urge toward life and beauty, moving from primary creation to the creation and procreation of each organism, stimulating the perception of beauty and the endeavor to achieve it, incarnating itself in matter and time as each organism (or "occasion") strives to build upon the experience of its predecessors, in a social existence directed ultimately toward a perfection of harmony seminally latent in eros itself.

Although Whitehead does not specifically stress the idea of eros until it is integrated with the development of civilization in Adventures of Ideas, the notion is already evident in the final pages of Process and Reality. The idea of eros seems to derive from Whitehead's attempt to describe the primordial nature of God. God is "the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality."[1] He is not before creation but with it. God is "deficiently actual"; "his feelings are only conceptual and so lack the fulness of actuality." God is 'dependent' upon the actualization of the universe, and upon each particular creative act within it.

> He is the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire. His particular relevance to each creative act, as it arises from its own conditioned standpoint in the world, constitutes him the initial 'object of desire' establishing the initial phase of each subjective aim.[2]

Since God himself is this "lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire", we might say that "the Eros of the universe" is ontically summoned by God as a kind of prime movement of the universe which results from a prime attraction. Eros is the dynamic movement of the universe toward the fulfilment and actualization of God. The "Eros of the Universe" is the "Primordial Nature of God."[3]

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1. Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, Cambridge University Press, 1929, p. 486
2. ibid. p. 487
3. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 326. The term "Eros" does not emerge, however, until identified as such in Adventures of Ideas. Previous works of Whitehead contain the idea, but no stress upon the word.

Eros and "love" are not strict synonyms for Whitehead. Love is diversely interpreted; it may be merely acquisitive, or it may be the common factor in human experience which facilitates an intuition of God. Whitehead identifies love as one of the primary factors in experience, an "animal passion" inclined towards apettence and satisfaction.[1] In this sense, human love is contained in eros, which urges lesser loves toward distinctly human expression. Those loves are more human which are characterized by an intimacy with beauty.

For Whitehead beauty may be of sensible, intellectual or moral quality. Indeed, beauty may redefine the idea of 'truth'. "There is a grandeur of achievement in the delicate adjustment of thought to thought which is independent of the mere blunt question of truth. We may term it 'beauty.'"[2] Whitehead's constant emphasis upon 'beauty' illustrates the importance of aesthetics for civilization. Eros and beauty are closely aligned, for beauty is that quality by which "animal passion" becomes socialized and also an intuition of God. Intellectual, moral, and sensible beauty "partake in the highest ideal of satisfaction possible for actual realization, and in this sense can be termed that beauty which provides the final contentment of the Eros of the Universe."[3] We may surmise, therefore, that individual acquisitive love is certainly a part of the same eros which constitutes the fulfilment of God, but only as love is able to appreciate and actualize beauty is it able to achieve its human purpose and possibilities. At the same time, eros, which is attuned to beauty, beckons individual loves toward greater and more beautiful ethical and social expressions.

Since eros represents a dynamic and progressive movement, from quantitative experience toward qualitative, there must be some

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 12
2. ibid
3. ibid. p. 13

transitional energy which facilitates the higher levels. Whitehead's whole philosophy presupposes freedom in each occasion of experience. The transitional energy, therefore, cannot be conceived as a determined or necessary law. Despite various forms of extraneous coercion, there always remains some available freedom to each occasion by which it can 'choose' alternative avenues of successive becoming. Whitehead's suggestion is that an occasion may choose the optimal mode of self actualization and greater beauty of experience if it is 'persuaded' to do so. "The progressive societies are those which most decisively have trusted themselves to...the way of persuasion."[1] The 'force' of Eros is not a coercive force, but one which, through the facilitation of the appreciation of beauty, persuades each occasion to strive toward greater possibilities. Whitehead lists three activities in civilization which have tended to promote "the way of persuasion" as a genuine stimulus for historical progress. "They are family affections aroused in sex relations and in the nurture of children, intellectual curiosity leading to enjoyment in the interchange of ideas, and...the practice of commerce."[2] Numerous other allusions to the power of persuasion imply that for Whitehead, the eros which seeks to achieve the highest forms of life and beauty does so best through persuasive energy, and not by force, necessity, or coercion.[3] The pervasive influence of subtle forms of persuasion throughout experience and civilization may constitute a sort of 'providence' in Whitehead's thought.[4]

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 109
2. ibid.
3. The 'notions' of eros and persuasion are pervasive implicit themes running through Adventures of Ideas, and, one might surmise, through all of Whitehead's philosophy. Nevertheless, the explicit references to them do not provide concise definitions capable of minute analysis. For example, the index to Adventures of Ideas lists only twelve references to "persuasion" and only ten to "Eros", but some grasp of both seems to be necessary for understanding Whitehead's integration of experience and civilization.
4. cf. D.W.D. Shaw, "Providence and Persuasion", The Duke Divinity School Review, Winter, 1980, Vol. 45, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, N.C. pp. 11 ff.

Although eros is optimally persuasive, it is not necessarily so. In lower forms it may be impulsively appetitive, ferocious, or cruelly dominant. Because it does not inhibit the freedom of particular occasions it can be allied with enslaving methods, while yet preserving its own capacity to highlight latent and potential beauty. Whitehead notices that a major difference between Greek philosophers and those today is the former presupposition of slavery as an acceptable means for achieving worthy ends. "The slaves were the martyrs whose toil made progress possible."[1] Nevertheless, the slave himself is subject to "the mystery of the human soul in its journey toward the source of all harmony...his body bent, his glance upwards." Although eros may freely mix with evil, it persistently tends toward a "reverence for that power in virtue of which nature harbours ideal ends,..the foundation for the respect for man as man."[2]

In light of the previous chapter stressing the relation of love and justice, it is important to note that for Whitehead, eros is certainly not absent when justice is not done. Although it has a capacity to be a tool of injustice, it nevertheless maintains its emphasis upon a greater potential for just relationships between (human) beings. Through its link with the human liability to persuasion, eros urges civilization toward tolerance and liberty. Whitehead suggests that persuasive methods may have been originally the most primitive, with force and ferocity developing from the increase in self-interest which accompanied an increase in intelligence. But, he argues, force is really the failure of civilization, and the true worth of human beings consists in their liability to persuasion.[3]

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 25
2. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 109
3. ibid. p. 105

Insofar as eros is a primal urge toward the acualization of God, it is dependent upon particular actualizations in history. These manifestations in concrete form may or may not resemble the conceptual possibilities which God envisions, nevertheless the conceptual character of eros is preserved even when it is allied with apparently evil representation. Because there is a definite link between God's conceptual possibilities and "the Eros of the Universe" which is attracted toward God for his fulfilment, eros cannot ultimately be determined by concrete expression of any particular form. This is to say that God's purpose is the ultimate purpose of eros, and its character as persistent drive toward beauty is not affected by injustice, intolerance, domination, and coercion.

I have noted that Whitehead's eros is somewhat indebted to Plato. It is clear that Whitehead, like Plato, attempts to construct "the most likely tale" avoiding the limitations of definitive systematization. Plato, Whitehead says, "is never entirely self-consistent, and rarely explicit and devoid of ambiguities. He feels the difficulties and expresses his perplexities. No one could be perplexed over Aristotle's classifications; whereas Plato moves about amid a fragmentary system like a man dazed by his own penetration."[1] Eros is (literally) the central 'notion' of seven, which Whitehead alleges to be "as important for us now, as they were then at the dawn of the modern world, when civilizations of the old type were dying." They include The Ideas, The Physical Elements, The Psyche, The Eros, The Harmony, The Mathematical Relations, and The Receptacle. Although it is impossible here to examine Whitehead's reinterpretation of each of these, it is important that they are, in the thought of both Plato and Whitehead, "interwoven". No one concept can stand alone, but must broadly be interrelated with the others. The Ideas

1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 188

depend upon "compatibilities and incompatibilities" which are "the key to coherent thought, and to the understanding of the world in its function as the theatre for the temporal realization of ideas." Ideas only obtain creative efficiency by being entertained in a living intelligence, a Psyche, a 'soul ' (Hegel's Geist), "whose active grasp of ideas conditions impartially the whole process of the Universe." "There is a "perfection" in this Psyche which gives it the character of "Supreme Craftsman", responsible for such orderliness as the world exhibits. "There are also finite souls of varying grades, including human souls, all playing their part in conditioning nature by the inherent persuasiveness of ideas."

> But the notion of mere knowledge, that is to say, of mere understanding, is quite alien to Plato's thought. The age of professors had not yet arrived. In his view the entertainment of ideas is intrinsically associated with an inward ferment, an activity of subjective feeling, which is at once immediate enjoyment, and also an appetition which melts into action. This is Plato's Eros, which he sublimates into the notion of the soul in the enjoyment of its creative function, arising from its entertainment of ideas. The word Eros means 'Love', and in the Symposium Plato gradually elicits his final conception of the urge towards ideal perfection.[1]

Whitehead's interpretation of Plato's eros is somewhat subjective, and might not be accepted by everyone. As we have noticed, the concept of eros in the Symposium is subject to diverse interpretation. Whitehead, however, does observe the development in Plato's thought which accounts for much of the controversy about the nature of eros. Whether Diotima's discourse was really Plato's "final conception of the urge towards ideal perfection" is still a matter of debate. But what we do have here is a characterization of Whitehead's own foundation for the 'height and breadth' of love. What Whitehead sees as missing from Plato's notion of eros is the perennial disharmony in nature with which eros so often finds itself aligned. Whitehead suggests that Plato "should have written a

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1. ibid. p. 189

companion dialogue which might have been named "The Furies", dwelling on the horrors lurking within imperfect realization."

> Plato, although he neglected to write this missing dialogue, did not overlook the confusion and disorder in Nature. He expressly denies omnipotence to his Supreme Craftsman. The influence of the entertainment of ideas is always persuasive, and can only produce such order as is possible. However, on this point he wavers, and sometimes writes as if the Craftsman were disposing the world according to his supreme will.[1]

But Whitehead does not waver; God has a purpose but not a strict design. Eros is subject to all the freedom in the universe. Whitehead stresses that "there is complete freedom among contemporaries" (i.e. in the evolution of the universe, apart from extraneous kinds of force which appear in civilization). "It is not true that whatever happens is immediately a condition laid upon everything else."[2] Although eros is subject to freedom abused by individual occasions and which indeed contributes to "the horrors lurking within imperfect realization", momentary 'furies' are survived in the surge of "teleological self-creation".

> The running stream purifies itself, or perhaps loses some virtue which in happier circumstances might have been retained. The initial phase of each fresh occasion represents the issue of a struggle within the past for objective existence beyond itself. The determinant of the struggle is the supreme Eros incarnating itself as the first phase of the individual subjective aim in the new process of actuality.[3]

"All simplifications of religious dogma," says Whitehead, "are shipwrecked upon the problem of evil."[4] The assertion of God's omnipotence cannot easily reconcile the "cross purposes" which accompany inherent freedom in every occasion and in every 'society' of occasions.

> We live in a common world of mutual adjustment, of intelligible relations, of zest after purposes, of valuations, of joy and grief, of interest concentrated on self, of interest directed beyond self, of short-time and long-time failures or successes, of different layers of feeling, of life-weariness and of life-zest.[5]

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 189
2. ibid. p. 255
3. ibid. p. 256
4. Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making, Meridian Books, World Publishing Co. New York, 1960; (MacMillan, New York, 1926) p. 74
5. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit. p. 77

"There is evil," says Whitehead, "when things are at cross-purposes."[1] Nevertheless, "the inconsistency in the world is derived from the consistency of God."[2] God's purpose is "to secure the avoidance of evil" through the influence of good which overcomes it. Although evil is somewhat inherent to the nature of things, it is not 'necessary', and because it is 'unstable' it may be a factor in the passage to greater beauty, exactly insofar as it is a 'negative' stimulus to progress. Although evil is destructive it becomes "positive" because, by avoiding it, eros surges toward higher quality in successive occasions. As Whitehead so often stresses, artificial programmes which intend to pre-determine possible evil by the limitation of available freedom may have the effect of limiting the possibilities for progress. Thus great societies are those which are able to correlate with the higher nature of eros and the purpose of God through widespread reliance upon forms of persuasion, producing conditions favorable to an "upward" evolution.[3] Similarly, a religion which is truly progressive in character must change its emphasis from "the will of God" to "the goodness of God." As it does so, "religion can be, and has been, the main instrument for progress."[4]

"The immanence of the basic Eros", Whitehead tells us, "endows with agency all ideal possibilities."[5] Whitehead's theory of dipolar experience assumes "an extensive continuum" only a fraction of which can be conscious. there is a "mental pole" of each "epochal occasion" which synthesizes recent past experience and contributes its own "novelty", to be successively assimilated by future occasions. There is also a "physical pole" of each occasion which receives data from "actual entities" and whose activity constitutes "pure feeling". The interdependence of mental and physical poles brings into beings new possibilities as they interact with each other.

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1. ibid. p. 94
2. ibid. p. 96
3. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 88
4. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit. p. 36
5. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 270

The mental pole derives its objective content by abstracting from the physical pole. In this abstraction potential novelty arises via eros' activity in the new phase, and "the objective universe has passed from the function of a basis for a new individuality to that of an instrument for purposes." This is Whitehead's reinterpretation of Descartes' Cogito ergo sum. Obviously, this is a complex theory, and despite its importance, it cannot be explained adequately in a few paragraphs.[1] A great part of this theory is, in fact, Whitehead's interpretation of Plato's notion of eros, quoted above: "The entertainment of ideas is intrinsically associated with an inward ferment, an activity of subjective feeling, which is at once immediate enjoyment, and also an appetition which melts into action." The immanence of eros in the first phase of each new occasion constitutes God as the "initial aim" for that occasion.[2]

As an "activity of subjective feeling...melts into action" there is also here a notion of "praxis" in the classical sense of activity conditioned by theory. Whitehead is not offering a theory of random activity, which by chance happens to hit on the appropriate combinations for progress. Instead, he is suggesting that progress, both in history and in evolution, is a function of prior experience brought to a specific point, which is then synthesized with new possibilities and new intuitions. It is a "praxis" without necessity, but with the constant influence of God's purpose for the universe, incarnated in each point of decision as eros seeking beauty. Unlike Marxist "praxis", Whitehead's does not depend upon consciousness. It goes on beneath consciousness, and in spite of it, to secure greater intensity and quality of successive experiences.

Human consciousness, Whitehead implies, may contain the criteria of 'truth', but it is not an adequate judge of reality. "Truth

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 270 (For an adequate treatment of Whitehead's theory of di-polarity, cf. John B. Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, Lutterworth, London, 1965; esp. Chapter I)
2. ibid. p. 256, cf. pp. 189, 326

is a qualification which applies to appearance alone. Reality is just itself, and it is nonsense to ask whether it be true or false."[1] Truth has a variety of degrees and modes. Truth depends upon the "nexus" about which certain statements are concerned. The nexus may be any ascribed 'togetherness' of various occasions, or societies of occasions, to which some proposition may have partial relevance. But "to know the truth partially is to distort the universe."[2] Two patterns, the one ascribed, the other descriptive of the ascription, can never hope to state things as they actually are, but only things as they appear. Thus, for Whitehead, a statement of truth is always relative to the apprehension of appearance.

For example, Whitehead notes that an infant feels its mother's cheerfulness as "a complex fact of the mother's existence, body and soul." An "affective tone" mediates for the child what may be in fact the appearance of the mother, yet the child is unable to give expression to this 'truth' according to 'types' identified by adults.[3]

Although there may be some interruption between appearance and reality, so far as senses mediate the former and imply the latter, so far as there is indeed a conformity of sense and feeling in the universe, between what we suspect through our senses and what turns out to be somewhat dependable on the basis of prior experience, Whitehead suggests that nature contains within it "a tendency to be in tune." Truth continues to be a relative term, for our experience is always partial, and "appearances are finally controlled by the functionings of the animal body."[4] But so far as there is a correlation between sense experience and appearances of nature, Whitehead suggests that there is a perfection of nature in respect to the higher types of animal life, - evidence of "an Eros urging towards perfection."[5]

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1. ibid. p. 309
2. ibid. p. 311
3. ibid.
4. ibid. p. 322 This theory is quite similar to Feuerbach's theory of Sinnlichkeit. Truth lies in feeling, not necessarily in reason or consciousness.
5. ibid. p. 323

2. The Adventure of Eros

The eros which is conceived as "the soul stirring itself to life and motion", the "first phase" in every new occasion, the "initial aim" of each subjective form which is given by God for the determination of actuality from perceived possibility, takes form in civilization as an impulse toward truth, beauty, adventure, art and peace. I have already alluded to Whitehead's interpretation of truth and beauty. Generally, beauty is a wider and much more comprehensive notion than truth, and in fact interprets truth in many respects. Truth is dependent upon appearance, and aesthetic feeling conditions how any "nexus" appears. "Truth is various in its extent, its modes, and its relevance." Thus a "Truth of supreme Beauty lies beyond the dictionary meanings of words."[1] Truth is neither good nor bad, but justifies itself insofar as it promotes beauty. Nevertheless, falsehood brings beauty to a lower level, and so trivializes the eros in all experience which seeks perfections.[2]

"Art", says Whitehead, "is purposeful adaptation of Appearance to Reality." Art is possible because there is a conformity of feeling in the universe, and because there is a possible but not 'necessary' "connectedness" of feelings in nature. A "harmony of feeling" may be created through art which is both beautiful and truthful, notwithstanding its success in describing reality. Insofar as art does connect with reality, Whitehead suggests there may be "a perfection of Art" which he calls "Truthful Beauty".[3] In addition to truth and beauty, art may also contribute to "Goodness" in civilization. Goodness, however, has too often been a byword of "low-toned moralists" who in the defence of morals would limit art's capacity to create goodness. Art depends upon consciousness, and for this reason, it lies somewhat subject to the mores of a particular culture.

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 343
2. ibid. p. 344
3. ibid. p. 345

But Whitehead facetiously observes that there may have been some species of amoebae who refused to migrate from ocean to dry land in defence of morality, thereby inhibiting their evolution. Art's adventurousness is part of its service to society.[1] "It requires Art to evoke into consciousness the finite perfections which lie ready for human achievement."[2]

The eros objectified in beauty is inadequate to promote civilization; a sense of "Adventure is essential, namely, the search for new perfections."[3] Since all realization is finite, Whitehead tells us that there is no perfection which is the infinitude of all perfections. Even God, especially God, requires continuous qualitative improvement for his actualization. So it is for every society; a strictly conservative approach to the universe would constitute the worst possible idolatry. "Stagnation is the deadly foe of morality," yet, Whitehead observes, the champions of morality are on the whole the fierce opponents of new ideals. In questions of morality, as well as in science, art, and commerce, there is the choice between advance or decadence. "The pure conservative is fighting against the essence of the Universe."[4] The character of the universal eros is "life and motion"; without the activity of the Psyche and the Eros, Whitehead states, "we should obtain a static world."[5]

All actuality is essentially a process. The "hybrid" rules over the constant perishing of the past, by creating new possibilities for the future through an experience of the immediate past in an encounter with the mental pole of the new occasion, called a "soul".

> The Soul thereby by synthesis creates a new fact which is the Appearance woven out of the old and the new- a compound of reception and anticipation, which in its turn passes into the future. The final synthesis of these three complexes is the end to which its indwelling Eros urges the soul. Its good resides in the realization of a strength of many feelings fortifying each other as they meet in the novel unity. Its

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1. ibid. p. 346
2. ibid. p. 348
3. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 332
4. ibid. p. 354
5. ibid. p. 355

> evil lies in the clash of vivid feelings, denying to each other their proper expansion. Its triviality lies in the anaesthesia by which evil is avoided. In this way through sheer omission, fewer, fainter feelings constitute the final Appearance. Evil is the half-way house between perfection and triviality. It is the violence of strength against strength.[1]

In this extract we see the indispensable role of eros in the movement of all things past and present toward an undetermined future. We also notice the role of evil as "the half-way house between perfection and triviality", which cannot be completely avoided if the process is to continue. For Whitehead, the idea of "Adventure" entails the risk of evil for the benefit of the "life and motion" of civilization and the universe. To make something of a perishing past is the task of each new occasion. An inhibition of the adventure of eros is an inhibition of the process of creation.

> The process itself is the actuality, and requires no antecedent static cabinet. Also the processes of the past, in their perishing, are themselves energizing as the complex origin of each novel occasion. The past is the reality at the base of each new actuality. The process is its absorption into a new unity with ideals and with anticipation, by the operation of the creative Eros.[2]

The juxtaposition of a "creative Eros" with actual process, both creative, overcoming evil, not by merely avoiding it, but by synthesizing it with good in successive experiences and epochs, leads us, possibly without Whitehead's intention, to a notion of grace. This grace does not operate from outside human experience but through it, and through all the molecules and forces of creation. To this extent it resembles somewhat that grace which was discovered in the anthropocentric theology of liberation. If the "Divine Eros" is as characterized by the persistence of 'persuasion' as Whitehead suggests, then with that grace we also have the foundations for a providence which stems from God's purpose incarnated in the life of each successive occasion, an eros in each individual whose 'initial aim' is socially "lured" toward God.

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1. ibid.
2. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 356

For the moment, we must reserve judgement about Whitehead's mixture of evil with the adventure of eros. Whether the evil is quite as indispensable as Whitehead claims demands further study. Nevertheless, we may indeed acknowledge that freedom for being persuaded may necessarily entail freedom not to be. And, as Whitehead observes, evil does seem to be aligned with "the violence of strength against strength", for the development of strength is a result of the appropriation of freedom. Wherever there is freedom, there may be evil also. But where good overcomes evil, where novelty arises and new ideas are conceived and aimed for, there also may be some substantive benefit to God, the "lure" for this Eros. If so, then the "creative Eros", the "Divine Eros", and "the Eros of the Universe" constitute one movement which in theology might be called grace-the purposes of God incarnated in the minds and matter of creation.

Whitehead's attempt to explain experience with reference to physical and mental poles, interdependent upon, and interacting with each other in a continuous stream producing new occasions, is an attempt to destroy the Cartesian dualism between mind and matter. Since this holistic view has the concept of eros at its centre, and since eros, after all, represents a universalized idea of love, we are once again reminded of Feuerbach.

Feuerbach hoped to show that love is the foundation of self-consciousness, a substance both material and spiritual is essence; taking shape first as sense, then as feeling, and eventually as "species-consciousness" transcending individual and specific manifestations. For Feuerbach, "Sinnlichkeit" was the substance of thought, and he struggled to make the elements of sense and feeling present in matter as it is in human nature. Perhaps the closest he was able to come was his often quoted aphorism "Der Mensch ist was er isst" (Man is what he eats.) But, as Marx Wartofsky has observed, to successfully reconcile the problem of mind and matter, one must

be able to show that matter is capable of consciousness, and this Feuerbach could not do.[1] Through the idea of love, he tried to "posit the infinite in the finite", showing how the 'material' of feeling becomes unlimited in imagination. Although Feuerbach was a precursor of Whitehead upon the synthesizing characteristics of feeling, and indeed on the pervasiveness and transcendence of love, he was not able to trace the movement of matter to mind.

Whitehead has done what Feuerbach could not because he refused to begin with the duality of mind and matter, but has sought to show that an integration of the two may be conceived through the notion of experience.[2] Since all experience has both physical and mental poles which interact, electrons, molecules, bread, and thought are not essentially dissimilar. It is "the Eros of the Universe" which not only brings together the physical and mental poles of atoms, but which also envisages the resolution of infinite numbers of atoms in a "world-consciousness", for "an epochal occasion is a microcosm inclusive of the whole universe." [3]

Whereas Feuerbach sought to translate religion into a developing "species consciousness", Whitehead seems to argue that such a religion would not be great enough.

> Now, so far as concerns religion, the distinction of a world-consciousness as contrasted with a social consciousness is the change of emphasis in the concept of rightness. A social consciousness concerns people whom you know and love individually. Hence rightness is mixed up with the notion of preservation. Conduct is right which will lead God to protect you, and it is wrong if it stirs some irascible being to compass your destruction...But a world-consciousness is more disengaged. It rises to the conception of an essential rightness of things.[4]

Whitehead's "rational religion" identified with the growth of a "world-consciousness" is, in some ways, similar to Feuerbach's "species-consciousness", developed as an alternative to inadequate

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1. cf. Marx Wartofsky, Feuerbach, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 250
2. cf. Process and Reality, pp. 48-50 "The ultimate metaphysical truth is atomism." (cf. John B. Cobb, A Christian Natural Theology, op. cit.)
3. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit. p. 89
4. ibid. pp. 39-40

manifestations of consciousness in exclusive religions. But Whitehead's view is much wider, for by "an essential rightness of things" Whitehead hopes to overcome every tendency of religious consciousness that is aimed at self-preservation, which "leads to the morbid exaggeration of national self-consciousness."[1]

Whitehead insists that "if the modern world is to find God, it must find him through love and not through fear."[2] Feuerbach, in his way, would have agreed. The same critique of religion which forced Feuerbach to "sacrifice God to love" is also discerned by Whitehead:

> History, down to the present day, is a melancholy record of the horrors which can attend religion: human sacrifice, and in particular the slaughter of children, cannibalism, sensual orgies, abject superstition, hatred as between races, the maintenance of degrading customs, hysteria, bigotry can be laid at its charge. Religion is the last refuge of human savagery.[3]

Finally, despite certain similarities of theme, Whitehead parts company from Feuerbach on the question of God. The difference is not Feuerbach's 'atheism' for the atheism is superficial. Rather, the difference is primarily concerned with the way God enters into matter. While Feuerbach noticed that love (as Sinnlichkeit) is a principle of unity between matter and consciousness, he was not able to make love the creative principle of all things.[4] Whitehead, on the other hand, begins with love (as Eros) and identifies its activity in every synthesis of the universe, surging toward the simultaneous 'perfection' of both God and the finite world.

Whitehead, in characterizing "the Adventure of Eros", further notes that Eros plays a role in forming the conceptual entertainment, comparison, and synthesis of incompatibilities. This role is relevant

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1. ibid. p. 42 A tragedy of misinterpretation is the way Feuerbach's "species-consciousness", by way of Nietzsche, became associated with the Aryan supremacy of the Third Reich in Germany.
2. ibid. p. 73
3. ibid. p. 36
4. I think Feuerbach wanted to do this, for he called love "a creative principle." But because he insisted on beginning "with being itself" (i.e. Dasein) he could not sustain the metaphysical basis for love's essential creativity prior to the existence of matter.

to the formation of every present society from the past, to civilization, and also to the realization of God himself.

> This principle of intrinsic incompatibility has an important bearing upon our conception of the nature of God. The concept of impossibility such that God himself cannot surmount it, has been for centuries quite familiar to theologians, Indeed, apart from it there would be difficulty in conceiving any determinate divine nature. But curiously enough, so far as I know, this notion of incompatibility has never been applied to ideals in the Divine realization. We must conceive the Divine Eros as the active entertainment of all ideals, with the urge to their finite realization, each in its due season. Thus a process must be inherent in God's nature whereby his infinity is acquiring realization.[1]

Whitehead seems to be saying that every transition from past experience to future experience entails various possibilities, some of which are compatible and some not. In addition, the possibilities which are optimal for one society of occasions are not necessarily compatible with the optimal possibilities revealed for others through the universal eros. Before passing to a new phase of existence, each occasion or society of occasions must "entertain conceptually" (though not necessarily consciously) its possibilities. Conceptual comparisons are then considered under the influence and persuasive guidance of an "initial aim" which is representative of a vector of eros toward both the actualization of God.

Although the occasion cannot actualize incompatibilities since all actualization is finite, there is nevertheless a sense in which God 'contains' incompatibilities because his purposes are only conceptual. But because God's purposes are constantly geared toward perfections and syntheses, the incompatibilities of today may be resolved and synthesized tomorrow, via further possibilities and appropriate initial aims revealed to future occasions. In this way, God is not bound by incompatibility in history, nor is his nature jeopardized by the evil entailed in the various realizations so far manifested, the "cross purposes" of individual occasions and societies of occasions.

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 357

The "Divine Eros" continues to persuade future occasions toward syntheses, for "we must conceive the Divine Eros as the active entertainment of all ideals, with the urge to their finite realization, each in its due season."[1] Although "Adventure rarely reaches its predetermined end,"[2] there is sufficient beauty in the by-products of adventure to justify it in civilization, to effect a continuous process by which eros persuasively overcomes the incompatible cross-purposes which result in temporary evil, and to contribute 'substance' to the actualization of God.

"The Adventure of Eros" is not an idea which can be stated succinctly, for it is a dynamic which is present in every atom and in God. Whitehead, like Leibniz, wants to tell us "how an atom is feeling about itself."[3] Then he wants to explain how the same élan vital in that feeling is also present in humanity, the universe, and even God. Adventure, not entropy, is the programme of this eros. Perhaps we can grasp this best poetically: "The moving finger writes and, having writ, moves on..." Or: "New occasions seek new duties; time makes ancient good uncouth." Yet this adventure, the 'goodness' of it, and the harmonizing capacity of its beauty, are not necessary nor to be taken for granted. For wherever freedom abounds in the universe, and wherever there are incompatibilities and "cross purposes" among the various occasions, evil lurks there too.

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 357
2. ibid. p. 359
3. ibid. p. 169 The relationship of eros to Whitehead's view of creativity is made explicit in Adventures of Ideas, but the relationship is implicit in other writings, particularly throughout Process and Reality.

3. Eros Maimed

"No religion which faces facts," Whitehead declares, "can minimize the evil in the world, not merely the moral evil, but the pain and suffering."[1] Christianity, he believes, admits the evil in the world to be inherent, but not necessary to it. Evil may be derived from "the contingent fact of the actual course of events." But in contrast to Buddhism, Christianity hopes to overcome evil with good, using evil, in a sense, to place life on a finer and more human level.[2]

As we have already seen, evil arises when occasions are at "cross purposes" with each other. "Evil is exhibited in physical suffering, mental suffering, and loss of the higher experience in favour of the lower experience."[3] "The evil in itself leads to the world losing forms of attainment in which that evil manifests itself."[4] Rampant suffering among a species, Whitehead tells us, will lead to the destruction of that species, or else the members of the species will lose the "delicacy of perception" which generally results in a particular kind of pain. Nevertheless, there is the chance that by learning how to minimize pain and evil, a society may gain "a finer and more subtle relationship among its bodily parts." For this latter reason, "evil is positive and destructive" while what is good is "positive and creative". Evil may be positive if it generates novelty which minimizes it, but it is always destructive because it represents some loss to future societies dependent upon the occasion that experiences the loss. It also represents loss to God, because evil destroys actualizations already accomplished and possibilities dependent upon those actualizations. The loss is to God's consequent actuality, but not to his conceptual purposes, his ideals, manifested through the eros. "The evil of the final

1. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit. p. 49
2. ibid. p. 51
3. ibid. p. 92
4. ibid. p. 93

degradation lies in the comparison of what is with what might have been."[1] Whitehead seems to imply that what has been achieved is not totally capable of destruction, since it becomes a part of God's conceptual nature. Whitehead calls this preservation of all experience in God "objective immortality". But the destruction has an effect upon what actually might have been achieved thereafter; and the evil accrues for the future society, as well as for the imminent realization of God. (For example, the unconceived children of those who die in war, and their social contributions, are lost to future civilizations.)

We observe that for Whitehead there is no simple solution to the problem of evil. It is destructive and for that reason must be avoided; yet it is not to be artificially delimited to the extent that by avoiding evil, adventure is jeopardized. The instability of evil is the ameliorating fact about it which renders it, potentially, a dynamic of process, and an indirect ally of eros.

> The common character of all evil is that its realization in fact involves that there is some concurrent realization of a purpose towards elimination. The purpose is to secure the avoidance of evil. The fact of the instability of evil is the moral order in the world.[2]

This "purpose...to secure the avoidance of evil" is the same urge toward life and motion identified as universal eros. Through it evil plays a role in its own destruction, and as Whitehead notes, moral order derives from the possibility that evil may be overcome, due to its instability, through the persistent 'force' of persuasion.

Because an individual cannot be conceived apart from relatedness to its past and its contemporaries, and because each individual has resource to some freedom, both novelty and evil are endemic to evolution. "The essence of freedom," says Whitehead," is the practicability of purpose."[3] Such practicability is limited by

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1. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit. p. 94
2. ibid. p. 93
3. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 84

the use made of freedom by prior occasions. This limitation does not totally destroy freedom for any successive occasion, however, and the contribution of a greater or lesser novelty is always a possibility for every occasion. Strict determinism is not a law of nature, for it would oppose the very conception of a motivating, sustaining, and creative Eros. Indeed, the nature of all "creativity", in Whitehead's terms, presupposes freedom, the potential for novelty, and the successive use of past novelty in the immediate past experience of each occasion. The use of freedom can produce either a novelty of some beauty and harmony, or it can produce conflicting purposes which constitute evil. Human purposes must compete not only with other human purposes, but also with the apparent purposes of nature's "iron laws".

Both freedom and evil are, in the context of the novelty and adventure which they enable or frustrate, somewhat defined by and relative to "the practicability of purpose".

> The massive habits of physical nature, its iron laws, determine the scene for the sufferings of men. Birth and death, heat, cold, hunger, separation, disease, the general impracticability of purpose, all bring their quota to imprison the souls of women and of men. Our experiences do not keep step with our hopes. The Platonic Eros, which is the soul stirring itself to life and motion, is maimed.[1]

'Eros maimed' is a concept of evil which illustrates the relative negative aspects of the conflict between opposing purposes. It succinctly describes the tragedy resulting from the use and abuse of freedom. Nature uses freedom for its purposes, and the 'laws' of nature have long been a major frustration of human purposes. But Eros is also maimed when human purposes are not compatible. In the above extract, Whitehead describes the massive suffering of humanity. Such suffering may be the result of cross-purposes with nature, but it may be as often the cross-purposes resulting

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 84
2. It may be recalled that Feuerbach saw in this suffering an indispensable basis for human community and species-consciousness.

in war, economic oppression, or numerous other kinds of exploitation of humans by others. The experience of suffering, common to all the world's peoples, has been a frustration of purposes, the limitation of possibilities, "the imprisonment of the human soul", by one force or another.

The general and universal frustration of Eros, of God's purposes for the world as a whole, highlights for Whitehead the 'absolute' character of freedom. Western culture, he thinks, is so engrossed in artificial or partial notions of freedom, primarily based upon individualistic ideals, that it has forgotten what freedom has meant for most of the world's peoples. The passage quoted above is neatly compared with the 'American' conceptions of freedom: freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom to bear arms, etc. "The literary exposition of freedom," he says, "deals mainly with the frills." If the essence of freedom is the general "practicability of purpose", then individualistic assessments of it may work against the widest possible appropriation of freedom. "Prometheus did not bring to mankind freedom of the press. He procured fire, which obediently to human purpose cooks and gives warmth...In modern thought, the expression of this truth has taken the form of 'the economic interpretation of history'."[1] Prometheus, we remember, was a favourite 'hero' of Karl Marx.[2]

> The fact that the 'economic interpretation' is itself a novel thought arising within the last sixty or seventy years illustrates an important sociological fact. The literary world through all ages belonged mainly to the fortunate section of mankind whose basic human wants have been amply satisfied. A few literary men have been in want throughout their lives, many have occasionally suffered...The fortunate classes are oblivious to the fact that throughout the ages the masses of mankind have lived in conscious dread of such disaster - a drought, a wet summer, a bad harvest, a cattle disease, a raid of pirates. Also the basic needs when they are habitually satisfied cease to dominate thought. Delicacies of taste displace the interest in fullness of stomach.[3]

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 84
2. cf. Karl Marx, Doctoral Dissertation; (in David McLellan, Early Tests, p. 13 and Karl Marx, His Life and Thought, Paladin, 1976; McMillan, London, 1973. p. 37)
3. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 85

Through the interests of the "fortunate directing classes", freedom becomes associated with secondary, yet aesthetically important ideals. Whitehead lists these as power, glory, safety in the distant future, forms of government, luxury, religion, excitement, dislike of strange ways, contemplative curiosity, and play. While these ideals undoubtedly play a role in the surge toward adventure, "the plain economic facts of life must be the governing force in social development." "The masses of the population are always there, requiring at least a minimum of satisfaction, with their standard of life here higher and there lower, also rising or falling."[1] For Whitehead, the primary demand for freedom is the general urge toward basic satisfactions, interpreted through a fusion of mass economic needs and the shaping ideals of minority "phantasies". Here again we are reminded of Marx's assertion that the predominant ideals of every age are always those of the ruling classes.[2]

Whitehead observes that in modern states, compared with more primitive tribal societies, the coordination of freedom has become complex. While it should be possible to preserve individual freedoms, this should not, and perhaps cannot, be achieved by "the destruction of the general ends of the whole community." Individuality only "gains...effectiveness" in coordination with the wider society. Perfections of individual goals are dependent upon the satisfaction of mass needs. This coordination of individual and mass freedoms, says Whitehead, is "the hope of the statesman."[3]

However, Whitehead affirms, "the hope of the statesman" is different from "the intuition which has nerved men to surpass the limitations of mankind."

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 85
2. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, in Essential Works of Marxism, ed. Arthur P. Mendel, Bantam Books, New York, 1961.
3. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 86

> After all, societies of primates, of animals, of life on the earth's surface, are transient details. There is a freedom lying beyond circumstance, derived from the direct intuition that life can be grounded upon its absorption in what is changeless amid change. This is the freedom at which Plato was groping, the freedom which Stoics and Christians obtained as the gift of Hellenism. It is the freedom of that virtue directly derived from the source of all harmony. For it is conditioned only by its adequacy of understanding. And understanding has this quality that, however it be led up to, it issues in the soul freely conforming its nature to the supremacy of insight. It is the reconciliation of freedom with the compulsion of the truth. In this sense the captive can be free, taking as his own the supreme insight, the indwelling persuasion towards the harmony which is the height of existence.[1]

There is poetry in this passage which may be trivialized through any attempt to explicate it. It seems to suggest the following interrelated "intuitions".

(1) Freedom is pervasive throughout the universe; the Eros which issues in ever-greater perfections is its justification and potential strength.

(2) Freedom takes form in history in relation to the general "practicability of purpose". When purposes are frustrated, when Eros is "maimed", there is an inhibition of freedom which may be called evil. Evil is a function of freedom.

(3) The primary usage of freedom in civilization is concerned with general need-satisfaction. Only insofar as mass needs are fulfilled are the more subtle usages of freedom effective in future terms, for future occasions. Yet minority ideals somewhat condition mass needs (eg. education for the few becomes a 'need' for the many.) Thus individual and mass freedoms must be coordinated.

(4) Nevertheless, in and through all this earthly frustration, this "transience" of individuals and societies, there is an enervating "intuition" of "freedom...beyond circumstance", of "what is changeless amid change." And in this intuition "the captive can be free."

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1. ibid.

Whitehead seems to be convinced that Eros, as it were, rises from its own ashes in every occasion, and in every society and civilization, to sustain and encourage creativity on all fronts. Without it, he implies, humanity long ago would have sunk in despair, species after species would have fallen into extinction, the general frustration of life would have become the totalization of entropy. Were it not for some 'intuition' of hope in the center of decay, the inhibition of purposes should have resulted in general decline as pervasive as the extent of evil and suffering. But this has not happened; despite the continuous perishing of individuals, there arise new generations, and with them new possibilities for harmony and beauty.

But notwithstanding the intuition of freedom in captivity, Whitehead's implicit criticism of western culture and its individualistic conception of freedom has a radical moral and political thrust. His explicit reference to economic relationships as "the governing force in social development", and his strong declaration that the "frills" of freedom are secondary to the needs of the masses, set him in the critical stance that we have so far observed in Feuerbach, Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, and the Latin American liberation theologians. There is no doubt that the experience of evil is real and tragic, even if evil itself must be somewhat inherent to any notion of freedom. The relatively trivial and ultimately tragic emphasis upon minor freedoms, such as "freedom of the press", must be set in the context of massive suffering. The broad impracticability of purpose which results through the maiming of Eros has a much greater effect of loss to future societies, and to the potential beauty of the universe, than to the single occasion. In comparison, the suffering which results from an inhibition of freedom of the press, or of the other pursuits which so characterize affluent civilization (such as power, glory, security, governmental preference, luxury, etc.), is infinitismal compared to the loss which occurs through hunger, war, disease,

heat and cold, and general deprivation. Whitehead implies that privilege is nice, but somewhat superfluous to the genuine priorities of civilization. Quoting Proverbs 30:8, he reminds us of the "wisdom" in seeking neither poverty nor riches.[1] Not only in his assessment of the material priorities, but also in his critique of power and privilege expressed in religion, Whitehead does not seem to be very far from the position of Feuerbach, Marx, and the liberationists.

> This worship of glory arising from power is not only dangerous: it arises from a barbaric conception of God. I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the bones of those slaughtered because of men intoxicated by its attraction...The glorification of power has broken more hearts than it has healed.[2]

Whitehead's extensive criticism of the 'idolatry' of conservatism illustrates even more profoundly his character as an Erasmus if not a Luther, a Feuerbach if not a Marx. The relevance of the following passage to the latent evil in well-meaning service to established order can hardly be missed.

> A hog is not an evil beast, but when a man is degraded to the level of a hog, with the accompanying atrophy of finer elements, he is no more evil than a hog...
>
> There is a self-preservation inherent in that which is good in itself. Its destruction may come from without but not from within. Good people of narrow sympathies are apt to be unfeeling and unprogressive, enjoying their egotistical goodness, Their case, on a higher level, is analogous to that of the man completely degraded to a hog. They have reached a state of stable goodness, so far as their own interior life is concerned. This type of moral correctitude is, on a larger view, so like evil that the distinction is trivial.[3]

In other words, one cannot 'cure' evil through the 'order' produced through legislation and bureaucracy. Frustration of purpose may be even more acute through overarching systematization perpetuating the status quo than through tolerance of freedoms liable to abuse.

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1. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit. p. 52
2. ibid. pp. 54-55
3. ibid. pp. 94-95

Whitehead notices ants as an example of a species for which survival through organization has resulted in minimal possiblities for novelty. Repetition on a mass level militates against quality achievable by individuals and groups, to the extent that the avoidance of evil becomes, in fact, the perpetuation of it.[1] The civilized limitation of the frustration of purpose must optimally take place through the exercise of persuasive, adventurous, and flexible moral codes which provide for the general welfare of masses while preserving individual "zest" and possibilities for novelty in future societies. Each novelty must be displaced; today's novelty is tomorrow's obsolete hindrance. There can be no 'final' system in Whitehead's view, and the attempt to construct one is a menace to civilization, yet another way in which Eros is maimed. We hardly need to remark that in Whitehead's observations there is a tacit affinity with much of Karl Marx's critique of ideology and interpretation of sensual human practice.[2]

The conscious arrangement of morality in tentative and flexible forms which highlight the potential openness and power in persuasion is Whitehead's general antidote for combatting that evil by which Eros is maimed in civilization. The priority is the satisfaction of general needs. But also important are those values which are recognized as authentic ideals by the privileged few. Beauty in civilization depends upon the coordination of individual and mass freedoms. There is a "zest" in human life, which even at the risk of abuse, must be preserved and charished. Insofar as there is some coordination of freedoms, the Eros which produces life and motion from suffering and evil is assisted in its surge toward God, and such evil as is inherent in the process may be 'positive' even

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1. cf. T.H. White, The Book of Merlyn, University of Texas Press, 1977, pp. 81 ff. White's interpretation of the Arthurian saga lets King Arthur, on the night before his death, pay a visit to an ant colony as one among them. Over the entrance to each tunnel is hung the statute: "EVERYTHING NOT FORBIDDEN IS COMPULSORY". Fortunately, for comparison, Arthur is also allowed to visit the wild geese. (Whitehead may have been White's inspiration in this and other respects.)
2. This connection cannot be explored here, and there are many differences. Basically "ideology" and "conservatism", and "practice" and "Adventure" are comparable ideas. Whitehead, for example, uses the phrase "Adventure of practice". cf. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op.cit.p.333

while it is destructive. Yet there is another kind of evil in the "perpetual perishing" of individual occasions over which humanity has little control. Whitehead calls this the "ultimate evil", and we must return to it shortly.

Meanwhile, however it is apparent that Whitehead's concept of "Eros...maimed" in and through human societies is also an identification of pervasive injustice on earth. If the power of persuasion is able to lessen this frustration of purposes, this injustice by which human endeavor is so often brought to nothing, then, on the positive side, we might investigate what sort of justice conscious human persuasion could make possible.

4. Eros and Justice

Any analysis of Whitehead's idea of justice must be based upon conjecture. Like the concepts of truth, beauty, evil, and so many other terms, the meaning of which "everybody knows", Whitehead is not disposed to accept simple definitions of justice. Indeed, he hardly even uses the term, and when he does it is characterized by ambiguity.

> There is a striking analogy between the hazy notions of justice in Plato's Republic and the hazy notions of private property today. The modern artisan, like Thrasymachus of old, is apt to define it as 'the will of the stronger.'[1]

Justice seems to be a relative term for Whitehead. It is relative to customs and expectations of any given human society at any given time. "There can be no contract," he says, "which does not presuppose custom, and no custom leaving no loophole for spontaneous contract."[2]

> The ancient gods, either as notions or as persons, did not create the thunderstorm, they explained it. Jehovah did not create the Hebrew tribal emotions, he explained them. He never made a covenant which initiated Hebrew history; the notion of the covenant was an explanatory idea. It was influential; but the idea arose as an explanation of the tribal history.[3]

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 80
2. ibid. p. 81
3. ibid. pp. 81-82

Whitehead implies in the above passage that any legal, social, or moral code depends upon some common experience and history which prompt the attempt to formalize customs and 'explain' them. If this is correct, then we may assume that, for Whitehead, there must be some identifiable principles of justice already at work in a given society before they can be formalized as law or contract. But these principles, apparently, are always in flux. In illustration, Whitehead traces the idea of private property, and the legal systems attempting to preserve it, from Roman times to the modern age. With the advent of corporations, he says, the idea of private property has become a "legal fiction". These new 'persons' cannot die, except by voluntary dissolution or bankruptcy. Yet systems of justice attempt to maintain the rights of individuals effective also for corporations. "The whole concept of absolute individuals with absolute rights, and with a contractual power of forming fully defined external relations, has broken down."[1]

Although Whitehead does not say much, specifically, about justice, he seems always to be thinking about it. We have already observed his concern for the needs of masses, as well as for the more subtle pruposes of privileged minorities. His assessment of civilization begins with the distinction between societies which have presupposed slavery, and those in the modern era which do not. An allied distinction is the development of commerce in the modern world. Whereas the Egyptians, wanting bricks, enslaved the Hebrews, now they must persuade the Hebrews to sell them. The idea of justice in Plato's time presupposed its relevance to an elite society of free men. Today the idea of justice assumes some egalitarian coordination for masses of free men and women. Another allied distinction

1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 80

for the modern world is the potential persuasiveness of religion which can produce just relationships. In illustration, Whitehead notes that "the Methodist appeal to the direct intuition of working men made the conception of the brotherhood of man and the importance of men a vivid reality."[1]

In feudal times, Whitehead observes, there was a social order which satisfied mass needs in a manner which would today be deemed unjust. Yet given the limitations of commerce and industry, the feudal system was often able to provide basic needs without slavery. "Each order had its rights and duties, and in the happier examples of later feudalism the villagers were quite competent to go to law with their feudal chief."[2] An attachment to the land was a kind of protection, if also a restriction. "It was the basis of a recognized status in an organized society - so far as the social system was organized, and was not a welter of violence."[3]

Modern industry, Whitehead thinks, is a kind of "neo-feudalism". The laws which pertain to "the self-sufficing independant man" really have no validity for modern civilization. The modern customs of commerce have, to a certain extent, already defined the parameters of social relationships, and, Whitehead asserts, individualists and socialists are only debating the details.[4] What we call justice, by implication, is contingent upon many forces and factors at work, over which individuals and nations have little control. Indeed, as the laws relating to private property illustrate, our ideas of justice are often related to outmoded ideals which may be incompatible with the society in which we live. The modern western nations attempt to uphold legal values relating to individuals, while the whole context of existence is defined by complex interrelationships of

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1. ibid. p. 28 (Whitehead seems to have overlooked the Methodist concern for women and children.)
2. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 33
3. ibid.
4. ibid. p. 34

commerce, industry, and custom which no longer acknowledge the individuality which might have pertained in a pre-industrial epoch.

Whitehead is not opposed to individuality, personality, or to the rights which may accrue to persons and individuals. He does, however, seem to oppose any isolated consideration of individualistic justice which is not appropriately related to the individual's role in society as a whole. "Plato," he says, "would have been horrified at the individualism of the Renaissance."[1]

Whitehead's idea of justice seems to be linked to his idea of freedom. Since freedom for the few is ultimately conditioned by the general practicability of purpose for the many, then any attempt to build justice into codes applicable only to the few is, in the long run, inadequate. The implication is that as long as general needs are not met, the "frills" of freedom preserved through justice structures are apt to be short-lived. The ancient, and not-so-ancient civilizations which have denied bread to the hungry, both within and without their respective borders, have often found their palaces and institutions ablaze or in decay. For this reason, says Whitehead, "the attempts at large-scale organization of Europe were a failure."[2]

Throughout the rise and fall of civilizations there has been the subtle but influential persuasion of commerce, and of the cross-cultural exchanges which accompany it. Because humans want things and need things, they continue to devise creative ways of making and acquiring them. To a great extent, any notion of justice is influenced if not determined by economic forces, and systems of justice based upon commercial practice have continued to 'explain' economic relations. As customs of commerce change so do systems of justice. In the modern world, Whitehead notes, legal codes have

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1. ibid. p. 38
2. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 38

tended to incorporate the somewhat suspicious moral value of competition: "'Thou shalt not murder, but tradition approves all forms of competition.'"[1]

> Wherever men looked, they saw 'competition' written across the face of things. Nations arose, and men thought of nations in terms of international competition. They examined the theory of trade, and they construed its interactions in terms of competition, mitigated by 'higgling'. They considered the bounty of nature in the provision of food, and they saw the masses of mankind competing for insufficient supplies. They saw the fecundity of nature in the provision of myriad species of living things, and they construed the explanation in terms of the competition of species. What the notions of 'form' and 'harmony' were to Plato, that the notions of 'individuality' and 'competition' were to the nineteenth century. God had placed his bow in the skies as a symbol; and the strip of colours, rightly read, spelt 'competition'. The prize to be competed for was 'life'. Unsuccessful competitors died; and thus, by a beautiful provision of nature, ceased from constituting a social problem.[2]

In view of the above extract, it is not difficult to see why Whitehead ambiguously compares the idea of private property with Thrasymachus' notion of justice. In both cases, the ordinary worker is apt to see "the will of the stronger" as the true determinant. Indeed, because justice systems stem from the "directing classes", and because these classes are usually intimately connected with the contemporary customs of commerce, and because commerce produces "private property" for anyone strong enough to get it and powerful enough to make laws to protect it - then, for Whitehead, there is indeed a connection between what has been called justice in the modern world, and the acquisition of property through commerce.[3] Because the justice that, as it were, "creates" private property is so tainted, yet, in another sense, somewhat positive in its capacity to preserve order and so certain possiblities for beauty, justice

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1. ibid. p. 39 (Whitehead gives no reference for this quotation.) (It may be from Roman Catholic encyclical at the turn of the century.)
2. ibid.
3. cf. Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 124:"The behaviour of the community is largely dominated by the business mind. A great society is a society in which its men of business think greatly of their functions. Low thoughts mean low behaviour, and after a brief orgy of exploitation low behaviour means a descending standard of life." Whitehead seems to imply that if the welfare of society, i.e. 'justice', is so dependent upon commerce, then those who involve themselves in commerce have the greatest ethical responsibility in civilization. Such morality cannot be derived from the hypostatization of "competition". The indictment of capitalism is clear.

in civilization remains an elusive, and perhaps illusive, concept. It is chronically ambivalent, and like evil, it has the potential both to assist and hinder Eros. Justice is continuously in flux, and so far as human beings are able to 'realize' it, systems which attempt to formalize it never keep step with the vicissitudes of life, custom, and especially, commerce.

Nevertheless, Whitehead suggests, any civilization which can encourage the broad and beautiful interchanges which commerce so often does entail - without lapsing again into forms of slavery, without making competition another kind of violence, providing for the needs of masses while preserving the ideals of the enlightened few - will also encourage the pervasive Eros in human life on its journey toward intensity of experience and greater beauty of prupose. And through the persuasiveness of Eros at work through the relatively uninhibited making and sharing of commodities, there may also arise an ever-greater justice in successive epochs.[1]

5. A Vision of Justice

While Whitehead's analysis of justice in civilization is primarily observant of the way that justice is relative to economic forces in history, there is another sense of justice in Whitehead's thought that is firmly grounded upon an apprehension of what is "changeless amid change". To decipher this other meaning of justice continues to be a project of abstraction and induction, based upon implicit references to ethical ideals, the interior process of civilization, and finally, his concept of "Peace".

True justice, it would appear, is not finally to be defined by its relative and short-lived manifestations in successive generations. It is rather to be characterized by a certain kind of "insight"

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1. Whitehead, of course, had a pre-Depression understanding of economics. To some extent his world-view shows in his principles of commerce. Whether his view is overly idealistic is not my concern.

into the "concresence", or "coming together", of myriad purposes and experiences by which civilization gains its creative momentum. There seems to be an interior justice in the nature of Eros which is best identified in its capacity to render various purposes practicable through the power of persuasion. "The creation of the world said Plato - is the victory of persuasion over force."[1] Justice, then, would be a set of customs, possibly also 'explained' in a moral, legal, or social code, which preserves the optimum possibilities for the persuasive dynamics of Eros. As we have already noted, Eros works by using freedom to the greatest possible advantage in promoting life, motion, beauty and intensity of experience, adventure producing novelty, the relationship of truth to appearance, and so on.

There is in Whitehead's thought an implicit and pervasive notion, allied with the idea of Eros, which is grounded upon an authentic "ethical intuition" latent in humanity. Although Whitehead does not call it "justice" we might not be far wrong in viewing it as a sort of justitia originalis by which the apparently acquisitive aspects of Eros 'come together' with ethical ideals and human love.[2] In civilization the persistent incorporation of this ethical intuition in persuasive justice structures can result in integrated realizations of "Peace".[3]

The "intuition" which I am calling a justitia originalis in Whitehead's thought is actually the comprehensive, innate understanding of life, civilization, evil, the universe, love, and God which "Galilean Christianity" originally expressed. For Whitehead all of these related manifestations of Eros may finally emerge into a "harmony of harmonies" or "Peace". The justice which it identifies

1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 31
2. But not the justitia originalis of Reinhold Niebuhr. cf. above, Chapter Four.
3. cf. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. Chapter XX.

and perceives as "practicable" lies undeveloped in any formal code. Yet, in some sense, it is already present as a form, as an idea, throughout civilization, integrating and synthesizing in the imagination things which are not because they have so far been hindered in their actualization due to the incompatibilities of circumstance. As Whitehead puts it, "You can only speak of mercy among a people who, in some respects are already merciful."[1] The "ethical intuition" 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice' is "explained", not invented, through Christianity.[2] Human beings must seek God through love, not through fear; and through love, not through coercion, human civilization may realize its greatest potential.[3] "The life of Christ is not an exhibition of over-ruling power. Its glory is for those who can discern it, and not for the world. Its power lies in its absence of force. It has the decisiveness of a supreme ideal..."[4] "The progress of humanity can be defined as the process of transforming society so as to make the original Christian ideals increasingly practicable for its individual members."[5]

> The greatness of Christianity - the greatness of any valuable religion - consists in its 'interim ethics'. The founders of Christianity and their earlier followers firmly believed that the end of the world was at hand. The result was that with passionate earnestness they gave free reign to their absolute ethical intuitions respecting ideal possibilities without a thought of the preservation of society. The crash of society was certain and imminent. 'Impracticability' was a word which had lost its meaning; or rather, practical good sense dictated concentration on ultimate ideas.[6]

The "impracticable ethics of Christianity", says Whitehead, is a standard and "a gauge by which to test the defects of human society."[7] "So long as the Galilean images are but the dreams of an unrealized world, so long they must spread the infection of an uneasy spirit."[8] The ethical ideals of Christianity are "gadflies irritating and beacons luring." "These ethical intuitions," Whitehead

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1. Whitehead, Religion in the Making, op. cit. p. 33 (cf. Feuerbach: "Mercy is the justice of sensuous life.")
2. ibid. p. 35 3. ibid. p. 73 4. ibid. p. 56
5. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 18
6. ibid. p. 19 7. ibid. p. 20 8. ibid. p. 21 9. ibid.

says, "are a direct application of metaphysical doctrine for the determination of practice."[1]

Early Christianity put into action what Plato had imagined and theoretically formulated. Included in the ideals of Christianity and Plato, perhaps eventually to be applicable for all civilization, are the notions of persuasion as a humanitarian value, spontaneity as "the essence of the soul," moral fervour intimate with tolerance, and a "professional practice" which overcomes primitive "trial and error."

Persuasion, as we have seen, is the mode by which optimal possibilities for social growth are created. Spontaneity for the intellect, the Psyche, is the capacity by which Eros is allowed the greatest freedom for building a positive future from a perishing past. Tolerance is the distribution of freedom for the intellect throughout a broad social nexus. "The duty of tolerance is our finite homage to the abundance of inexhaustible novelty which is awaiting the future, and to the complexity of accomplished fact which exceeds our stretch of insight."[2] The practice of a profession is the kind of specialization by which the free intellect may contribute the greatest benefit to the whole society. Given freedom to do so, professional practice becomes the antithesis of the primarily individualistic efforts characterized by primitive crafts and muscular labour. As theory conditions practice, and practice is related to the developing theory, informed by the whole context of experience from others within the 'profession', there is a "practicability of attainment" which has intensely social effects. Whitehead notes modern surgery as a significant example, the effectiveness of which has evolved through the combined facilitation of persuasion, spontaneity, tolerance, and professional practice.[3]

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 21
2. ibid. p. 65
3. ibid. pp. 72-73

There is yet another ingredient in Whitehead's vision of harmony, justitia originalis, or set of "ethical intuitions" incorporated in "Galilean Christianity." An objective enquiry into the nature of religion, and into the metaphysical suppositions which religion expresses, is likely to approximate the conclusion of Hume: "There is no such passion in human minds as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, or services, or of relation to ourself." [1] Hume's method, Whitehead thinks, precludes adequate consideration of "exceptional elements in our conscious experience...which may roughly be classed together as religious and moral intuitions." [2] Only a subjective enquiry, like Plato's, can hope to fathom the depths of human experience so that the universal intuition of unselfish, unbiased, and spontaneous love for other human beings may genuinely be considered. Whitehead set himself the task of showing that a religion can be conceived, and an associated metaphysic expressed, which can indeed demonstrate that there is a "love of mankind, merely as such."

This subjective and somewhat speculative "intuition" that the impulsive energy of Eros is not always selfish and acquisitive, but can be integrated with "the tendernesses of life", is theology's task to disclose, Whitehead declares. A theology which merely follows the method of objective analysis and definitive hypothesis becomes the victim of "perpetual perishing" and can give no answer to this "ultimate evil". By implication, Whitehead suggests, only a religion or a metaphysic which can entertain the idea of love can hope to grapple with the problem of evil.

The question of evil is ultimately concerned with the appearance of time as "a perpetual perishing." [3] The evil in all this

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 37 (cf. Hume's Treatise, Book III, Part II, Section I) Hume may have been exercising his hyperbole here. This does not necessarily agree with his idea of "benevolence" in Principles of Morals, Part I, Section II.
2. Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit. p. 486
3. ibid. p. 479

dying arises simultaneously with any explanation of human experience. Even in the demise of occasions of experience - among which are human occasions - "the culminating fact of conscious rational life refuses to conceive itself as a transient enjoyment, transiently useful." [1] On the face of the objective behaviour of the phenomena, Whitehead suggests that the best answer might be that of the Buddhist: "He giveth his beloved sleep."[2]

The nature of God becomes an important issue at this point. If the concept of God is such that "the world is conceived as a self-sufficient completion of the creative act, explicable by its derivation from an ultimate principle which is at once eminently real and the unmoved mover" - the resolution of Nirvana, says Whitehead, is the only answer to evil. The western derivation of such a God from Aristotle's notion of a prime, "unmoved mover" is the fallacy, says Whitehead, which is responsible for much of the tragedy in the histories of Christianity and Mahometanism. The main difference from the "Buddhistic type" (of deity) is that the world obeys the "imposed will" of the creator. The implication entails an "absolute despot" aloof from human process.

The concept of God in western thought has been greatly altered by the conversion of Constantine. At this time, Whitehead states, "Caesar conquered" - legal and dogmatic theology displaced the intuition of the original Galilean "vision". Constantine's lawyers edited the western text, and the Code of Justinian gave legal form to the official Roman faith: "It was an amalgam of Roman law, the Christian faith, and Hellenic philosophy channelled into theological speculation, in addition to an admixture of oriental elements...The heretics were suppressed and the pagans died out." [3] God was fashioned in

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1. ibid. p. 481
2. ibid. p. 482
3. cf. Roland Bainton, The Penguin History of Christianity, Vol. I, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1964. p. 137

the image of Egyptian, Roman, and Persian rulers. "The Church gave unto God the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar."[1] The idea of justice became identified with the interests of the Roman state; the idea of God became identified with the Roman idea of justice, and indeed, with the Roman idea of peace (viz. Pax Romana).

Meanwhile, "the brief Galilean vision of humility flickered throughout the ages, uncertainly."[2] But this vision was not enhanced by the rise of theistic philosophy, of Mahometanism, and the continuation of the religions' alliance with emergent civilizations. Whitehead identifies in the rise of Christendom three 'schools' of theology, none of which correlate with the 'vision' of early Christianity: (1) God is fashioned in the image of an imperial ruler. (2) God is the personification of moral energy and represented in a legal code attempting to absolutize the idea of justice. (3) God is an ultimate philosophical principle, such as Aristotle's "unmoved mover."

> The history of theistic philosophy exhibits various stages of combination of these three diverse ways of entertaining the problem (of theology?). There is, however, in the Galilean origin of Christianity yet another suggestion which does not fit very well with any of the three main strands of thought. It does not emphasize the ruling Caesar, or the ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover. It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love; and it finds purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved; also it is a little oblivious as to morals. It does not look to the future; for it finds its own reward in the immediate present.[3]

David Hume was right, Whitehead suggests, in finding in the three major strands of theology no justification for "the love of mankind, merely as such."[4]

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1. Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit. p. 485
2. ibid. p. 484
3. Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit. p. 485
4. ibid. (cf. Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion) Whitehead calls this a "masterpiece", correct but limited by its objective method.

6. Whitehead's Role in the Development of Love Theology

Theology and religion as generally practised in western civilization have often subjected love to some "evil being in which the devils participate." Kierkegaard's critique of "Christendom" in contrast to "Christianity", and Hegel's early identification of love as "the spirit of Christianity" are emphases which are philosophically similar to Whitehead's observation.

An analysis of religion may be based, for example, upon its objective manifestations in history or upon the more subjective idea or intrinsic "form" which is inherent in the metaphysical principles which the religion expresses. David Hume's 'positivist' and Marx's 'practical' analysis of religion are based upon objective criteria, and do not, for that reason, attempt to reinterpret or 'reform' religion. Feuerbach's critique is both positivist and somewhat subjective. Since Feuerbach depended so much upon Hegel, this is not surprising. Hegel, Feuerbach, Kierkegaard, and Whitehead were not content to assess the character of religion solely upon the face value of objective criteria. All of these philosophers concluded that the idea or "spirit" of Christianity cannot be assessed either by the historical manifestations of the religion or <u>through</u> a metaphysical system which is itself determined by phenomenological, positivist, or objective method. Each of the four was constrained to develop his own subjective mode of analysis in relation to the intrinsic 'form' of the religion, undetermined by the 'objective forms' the religion has assumed in history. Each of the four also identified as the central idea in the intrinsic or subjective form of Christianity the 'intuition' of love. Feuerbach tried to "materialize" this central subjective factor, but in light of the objective abuses of religion under the name of Christianity, thought it best to dispense with the whole set of 'religious' associations, leaving only love as the authentic principle upon which they were based.

Hegel, apparently, was not happy with the 'spirit' of his youth, and attempted to make love one aspect of the universal mind, or Geist, as love (viz. "the spirit of Christianity"), and tried to make love the "principle of unity" in what is already created (i.e. Dasein). Feuerbach reversed Hegel's final system and set love apart from and superior to reason. Kierkegaard, expertly familiar with the thought of Plato, Shakespeare, Kant, Hegel, and Feuerbach (inter alia), set himself the ambitious task of distinguishing between the Christian idea, or subjective form of love, and the various interpretations of love common in literature and philosophy. This entailed a complete revision of the idea of "Christianity" and a strong contrast of its principles with "Christendom". But the effect of Kierkegaard's radical distinction seemed to divorce the idea of Christian love from many of the metaphysical principles which had already been identified in the subjective form of Christianity by Hegel, Feuerbach and others (such as Leibniz, Kant, Schleiermacher, and even Descartes).[1]

Whitehead's identification of the idea of love in the original form of Christianity is, therefore, not at all unique. His philosophical extrapolation of the love identified in the intuition of Galilean Christianity has much in common with the young Hegel. But whereas Hegel began with love and ended with reason, Whitehead retains the idea of love, Eros undistinguished from agape, as the principle of creativity pervasive throughout the universe. Like Feuerbach, Whitehead identified love as the principle of unity which precedes and enfolds consciousness and existence. But unlike Feuerbach, Whitehead was able to make love the link between what we call matter and what we call mind in a continuous process of creativity, building upon a perishing past to create a promising

1. In the twentieth century, Nygren, Brunner, and Barth have, in broad terms, continued Kierkegaard's method, perpetuating the divorce of Christianity from metaphysics.

future. Like Feuerbach, Whitehead saw the idea of love as the energy in all social life, as the dynamic impelling individuals to seek community. But unlike Feuerbach, Whitehead was also able to project the creativity of love into the very essence, or realization, of God, the conceptual originof all that is lovely, and the consequent recipient of all that love achieves.

The comparison of Whitehead and Kierkegaard is more difficult. Both were "students" of Plato. Both were highly skilled in the anlysis of the culture of their day. Both knew the method of abstracting from objective data to discover the "truth" lying latent beneath (maieutics). Both refused to define Christianity by its appearance in history. Both recognized the 'value' in contemporary and literary art and enquiry. But where Kierkegaard drew lines, Whitehead made circles. Where Kierkegaard seemed to state definitions, Whitehead saw relationships. Where Kierkegaard interpreted or reinterpreted the past, Whitehead envisioned a future. And where Kierkegaard wrote "faith", Whitehead wrote "persuasion" or "purpose". Of course any comparison is unfair, for Kierkegaard and Whitehead were men of different epochs. Finally, there may be no simplistic choice to make between them. Whitehead was more reserved; Kierkegaard more explicit. Each spoke of love in his own way, and after everything was said, there was left for future generations a certain "concrescence", a synthesis or "coming together" of two possible approaches to one great intuition:

> That which in its vast abundance is <u>essentially</u> inexhaustible is also <u>essentially</u> indescribable in its smallest act, simply because essentially it is everywhere wholly present and <u>essentially</u> cannot be described.[1]

Plato saw it first. Perhaps, like the individualists and socialists who argue about commerce, philosophers and Christians "merely debate the details" of something which has a life and motion of its own.

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1. Soren Kierkegaard, <u>Works of Love</u>, op. cit. (Foreword)

7. Peace, Love, and Justice

We may identify the 'ground' of justice, an 'intuition' of a justitia originalis, in Whitehead's subjective analysis of the "Galilean vision" of love. But the questions of "ultimate evil" and of "Peace" are still outstanding. To reach toward some resolution between them, reason and theology, says Whitehead, must 'come together'.

> The task of reason is to fathom the deeper depths of the many-sidedness of things. We must not expect simple answers to far-reaching questions. However far our gaze penetrates, there are always heights beyond which block our vision.[1]
>
> The task of Theology is to show how the World is founded on something beyond mere transient fact, and how it issues in something beyond the perishing of occasions. The temporal World is the stage of finite accomplishment. We ask of Theology to express that element in perishing lives which is undying by reason of its expression of perfections proper to our finite natures. In this way we shall understand how life includes a mode of satisfaction deeper than joy or sorrow.[2]

As parts of Eros reach maturity in human consciousness, it may be synthesized with a certain kind of "tenderness", or love, in individual human occasions as "a positive feeling which crowns the life and motion of the soul." Whitehead calls it Peace, - a "Harmony of Harmonies which calms destructive turbulence and completes civilization."[3] This Peace is directly associated with that intuition of love - as supreme ground of justice, as the feeling which is "a little oblivious as to morals", as the intimation of an ultimate redemption of what is lost through the cross-purposes in human existence and the perpetual perishing of all experience - originally conceived in "the Galilean vision of humility".

As Eros is synthesized into Peace, it is able to confront the inherent tragedy of existence knowing that its ultimate purposes are not achieved "in this world". Therefore, "it does not look to the future", but may be content with the "interim ethics" of

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1. Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit. p. 484
2. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 221
3. ibid. p. 367

present experience, "a love of mankind, merely as such", which is gently persuasive in the context of the immediate past and the imminent future. The love which, in this pacific form, flows freely among human contemporaries as the completion of Eros in a given moment, while constantly dying, is nevertheless preserved somehow, in the consequent nature of God. God is the beneficiary of human loves, beauty, intensity of experience, and novelty, even though they are vanquished and extinguished by time and the frustration of circumstance.

The beauty achieved by Eros in its multiplicity of forms among actual entities so enriches God that he is able to empower individual occasions to seek their own greatest potential from any future given moment. This Whitehead calls "objective immortality". Even as the particular individual passes from the moment of immediacy, its achieved beauty is preserved, absorbed not only into the future of successive occasions, but also into the "ever-present fact" that is God.

> What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the world. By reason of this reciprocal relation, the love in the world passes into the love in heaven, and floods back again into the world. In this sense, God is the great companion, the fellow-sufferer who understands.[1]

Through this concept of "universal relativity", there is a soteriological or redemptive effect for all that Eros, in its impulsive and persuasive surge toward life and beauty of experience, has been striving for.[2] God is not so much the world's creator, as its redeemer, with a "tender care" for the preservation of all quality and beauty. And in this care, we may summarize briefly, there is no love lost.

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1. Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit. p. 497
2. Although Whitehead does not take the matter so far, he is open to the question of the soul's survival without dependence upon the body. God's nature as both temporal and non-temporal implies that he might be able to form a special relationship based upon the "mutual immanence" between himself and the individual soul, which could transcend temporality. cf. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 267

SUMMARY

It will be obvious to any reader of Whitehead that my understanding of his thought has really been a somewhat subjective interpretation. At the same time, any reader of Whitehead should appreciate that there may be no more appropriate way to interpret his ideas than through one's own subjectivity, and indeed, through one's own experience. His, he freely admitted, was not a final system, but a modern restatement of Plato's "most likely tale". Accordingly, the 'notions' which he related to his own experience have existed in 'form' throughout the ages. Only as they are given the light of contemporary usage may they remain, in some sense, real. The Ideas are only the property of the past if we refuse to relate them to the present. The Eros is never the property of the past, and despite our contemporary efforts to define it, it is always ahead of us.

The Eros, in Whitehead's thought as well as in Plato's, means 'simply', but broadly, love. And because it does mean that, it cannot be simple. It changes. It is frustrated. It takes new forms. It produces evil and overcomes it. It persuades. It issues in something beyond our experience of it. Plato tried on repeated occasions to nail it down. His 'final' interpretation in the Symposium is no more 'final' that that in the Phaedrus. The only difference was that Plato's own experience of it was coming to an end. Perhaps the closest he came to "naming the whirlwind" was this:

> Such a madness as this is given by God to man for his highest possible happiness.[1]

But it is not always a madness, for sometimes it is a "tenderness". Alfred North Whitehead has acknowledged that the New Testament is most persuasive precisely in its identity with the

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1. Plato, The Phaedrus, 245

tender moments of the human condition.

> There can be no doubt as to what elements in the record have evoked a response from all that is best in human nature. The Mother, the Child, and the bare manger: the lowly man, homeless and self-forgetful, with his message of peace, love, and sympathy; the suffering, the agony, the tender words as life ebbed, the final despair, and the whole with the authority of supreme victory.[1]

In this very tenderness, there is also a latent and original intuition of justice. Whitehead has told us, not always in so many words, that "the notion of an absolute despot has stood in the way" of our attempts to make justice on earth correlate with our intuition. "The tendernesses of mere life itself, in a world which superficially is founded upon the clashings of senseless compulsion" - these remain our clues by which to assist Eros on its way to greater "practicability of purpose." Religion, if it is retained, must somehow find new ways of affirming that evil may be overcome by persuasive love and not by force and coercion. Justice cannot be achieved by stressing the interests of a few while disregarding the needs of the many. But on the other hand, the needs of the many must not be allowed to overshadow the subtle beauty which the few may have to offer. And through all human experience there remains an indispensable 'zest', due respect and preservation in every civilization; for it is the very life of love.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that Whitehead's notion of Eros, of love alive in myriad forms, cannot be rendered impotent by an exclusive interpretation such as Nygren's. In a way that has not often been acknowledged by Christian theologians, Whitehead has tried to reveal a vital force which lies at the base of things and persists in an integral process which is supremely teleological. Perhaps we could call it grace. In a sense radically different from Nygren, Whitehead holds Eros to be not merely "man's way to God", but also God's way to humanity and all creation. It is, in Whitehead's view, God's eminent, persuasive way of initiating, creating, and saving all that is lovely.

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1. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, p. 214

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FUTURE OF LOVE

IMPLICATIONS AND INTUITIONS

Topical Survey

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FUTURE OF LOVE: IMPLICATIONS AND INTUITIONS

Any definitive conclusion arising from this 'symposium' would seem artificial and contrary to the spirit of the discussion. If theology, through critical reflection and exposition, has the capacity to promote the patient and persistent practice of love in successive epochs, then any attempt to crystallize the theory of love may be somewhat counterproductive. Nevertheless, the comparison of these different views may lead to certain convictions which, even though contingent upon the passing trends and partial understanding of our day, are indispensable to the further development of loves that lead to justice.

Although we have met many views on the nature of love and its relation to God, justice, epistemology, faith, ethics, history and civilization, we have barely scratched the surface. Only from the perspective of theology are concluding remarks appropriate, remembering that the literature of the world has repeatedly touched our theme. Theology's discussion of love has often been too limited and too reductive, artificially influencing its conclusions. Although this defect may be unavoidable, perhaps the least we can do is to acknowledge that our discussion is indeed limited, necessarily, by the historical patterns which continue to shape our thought, and by the specialized experience we attempt to interpret.

In this final chapter I will briefly attempt to summarize some of the most important issues arising among our selected thinkers. Then I will offer my own interpretation of those issues which appear to be most indispensable to the continuation of love-talk in a theology concerned with the preservation of the ideals of justice.

Review

Both the early Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach stressed that love is the essential content of the Christian religion. Human feeling

is so important in the development of religion, that those feelings which lead to "species-consciousness" and community are objectified in religion, despite doctrinal and rational objectifications of the nature of belief. Love plays an indispensable role in human self-consciousness, for as each individual meets another of its species and identifies that other as a 'thou', human beings are bound together in social interdependence. The human imagination plays a part in interpreting sense and feeling, so that what humans experience may be infinitely objectified, retaining the essential quality of the feelings. Thus, in the Incarnation, Christ personifies the highest and the best in humankind, including the human capacity to love others, to identify with the suffering of others, and to seek justice in human relations. Although Feuerbach is associated with atheism, his theological contribution is evident. We are challenged to seek the 'divine' in human attributes, particularly in human love. We are challenged to practice love in social relationships without subordinating love for others to a pietistic love for God. We are cautioned about conceiving God in ways which place faith in an omnipotent God above our responsibility to form better communities in this world. For Feuerbach, faith was found to be a contradiction of love, and finally incompatible with the justice required in social life.

Søren Kierkegaard, while critical of the "Christendom" of his day, took issue with Feuerbach's contradiction between faith and love. For Kierkegaard, faith was "the highest passion", and the proper introduction to the love of God. Kierkegaard sought to show that it is possible to love God passionately while also loving human beings in a proper relation to God. Developing St. Augustine's emphasis upon love for the neighbour as an equal before God, Kierkegaard insisted that love for God entails the duty to love the neighbour as oneself, unselfishly, without placing the self above the neighbour. Ordinary loves such as romantic love

and friendship, Kierkegaard declared, are really selfish loves in disguise. Only the love which is undetermined by the neighbour's potential for reciprocation is the love commanded by Christ. Only when God, infinite love itself, becomes the 'third party' in every relationship, is human love a proper response to the 'Royal Law': to love the neighbour as oneself. Although Kierkegaard emphasized faith in God, he also stressed that "a profession of faith is not enough." Love for the neighbour, conceived as a duty, keeps egocentric loves at bay, and preserves the eternal relationship with God. Kierkegaard's God, the Absolute, is omnipotent in his capacity to relate himself to human beings, removing the 'offence' in God's incommensurability with human nature. Thus Kierkegaard demonstrates a relational deity, who loves omnipotently, paradoxically removing the inequality with humanity through the Incarnation. Kierkegaard's God is worthy to be loved, because he identifies himself 'absolutely' with the human condition. He suffers, as man among men, contradicting the doctrine of God's impassibility. His omnipotence is the omnipotence of love.

The issues surrounding the development of 'neo-orthodox' Protestantism in the twentieth century are too diverse to characterize briefly. Anders Nygren's strict dualism between agape and eros led to much of the discussion. Here we have only considered the views of Nygren, John Burnaby, Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Karl Barth. Nygren's main assertions dealt with the pre-eminence of the word agape over other 'types' of love, and over the nomos of the Old Testament. Nygren asserted that only his definition of agape is proper to Christian faith. Agape, according to his definition, is the love of God: unconditional, unmotivated, spontaneous, dependent upon no quality in the beloved. Nygren opposed agape to the eros of neo-platonism: acquisitive, self-seeking, conditional, and motivated by value. Eros was objectified in the piety of Catholicism, concerned with merit and good works for the

attainment of salvation. Nygren's interpretation stemmed from a particularly Lutheran point of view, to which many other theologians have objected. We noted particularly the evidence of the doctrine of the Fall in Luther's interpretation, and his inadequate doctrine of Creation. We also observed that Nygren's interpretation of agape cannot be sustained by modern New Testament scholarship.

Emil Brunner's emphasis upon faith, the 'divine imperative', was noted to be, in some respects, inconsistent with an emphasis upon correlative love. Brunner, for example, stressed the 'orders' which must be preserved, even at the expense of Christian love. Similarly, Reinhold Niebuhr's characterization of the 'impossible' love of the New Testament, wholly sacrificial and disinterested, does not seem to correlate well with much of Jesus' teaching. Niebuhr's emphasis upon a practical justice in human society, while having much to commend it, sets love and justice in opposition to each other. Niebuhr's interpretation of justice, while not always consistent, is most typically described by "the fence and the boundary line", giving little indication of the possibility of practical intimacy between justice and love.

Karl Barth's later emphasis upon an active human love, corresponding with the creative, active, electing, sustaining love of God, was discerned to be a significant development of the early exclusive concerns of neo-orthodox thought. Barth's grounding of God's love in the Old Testament covenant, revealed in Christ, and expressed on behalf of the poor and the suffering against the rich and mighty provides a secure foundation for the alignment of Christian love with justice issues. Barth's willingness to use the term eros, his refusal to conceive God's will as flowing directly through the faithful human, and his emphasis upon God's grace as the dominant force in creation led to my conviction that Barth's view is full of resources for the continuation of love-talk in the light of human sin, political oppression, and economic deprivation.

The Latin American liberation theologians bring love and justice together in a new focus. Shaped within the contemporary Latin American milieu, their concerns stem from massive human need, economic inequality, government by force, and foreign exploitation. Although their perspective is primarily Roman Catholic, they have departed significantly from many of the traditional doctrines, looking at justice issues in a new light. God's love, for example, may take the form of wrath against oppression. God's cause, like that of Jesus, is identified with the poor and the suffering. The kingdom of God is not only a spiritual but also an economic and social entity, to be 'built' here and now, by persons who are committed to a new social order. The social order of which they speak is neither exclusively Christian nor Marxist, but both Christian and Marxist ideals play a role in its formulation. Love is interpreted as a 'concrete' task, and 'efficacious love' is the kind of love which promotes justice in Latin American society, and wherever poor persons are found. This interpretation has led to a 'new' Christology, with a special emphasis upon Jesus' radical commands, and upon the radical nature of the kingdom of God which he envisioned in history. Although we have had cause to question a certain disposition toward the use of violence, with which Christ's love may not necessarily be allied, the interpretation of love in intimate correlation with the issues of human justice is a challenge to theology around the world.

Alfred North Whitehead represents a theological genre which is both old and new. His interpretation of love stems, in significant degree, from the interpretations of Plato. His writings of the early twentieth century have been increasingly adapted by contemporary 'process theologians' in an attempt to find greater relative connections between science, metaphysics, and the social sciences. We looked at Whitehead's view of eros as it blends with developing civilization and other factors in the universe. Significantly,

we noted that the universal nature of eros could not be contained within an exclusive view of Christian love. Although Whitehead's 'intuitions' are somewhat speculative and often complicated, it is doubtful that 'love' can be adequately conceived without giving some attention to the greater relationships of life, matter, and experience, with which Whitehead attempted to deal. Important for theology is the fact that Whitehead retained the idea of God. Many of the ancient themes of theology may be discerned, from a new perspective, in Whitehead's thought. In such themes as persuasion, objective immortality, mutual immanence, and 'the eros of the universe' theologians may discover new ways of integrating theory and practice.

Crucial Issues

In H.G. Well's romantic novel Love and Mr. Lewisham, the hero, intent upon an academic career, suffers the inconvenience of falling in love. After many ups and downs with his beloved, his career, and his fortune, Mr. Lewisham is finally enlightened in the depths of his frustration and despair. Mr. Lewisham's 'enlightenment' may have a certain oblique bearing upon the discussion of love in modern theology.

> His mood sank for a space to the quality of groaning... 'What a mess we have made of things!' was his new motif. 'What a mess!'
>
> He knew love now for what it was, knew it for something more ancient and more imperative than reason. He knew now that he loved her, and his recent rage, his hostility, his condemnation of her seemed to him the reign of some exterior influence in his mind. He thought incredulously of the long decline in tenderness that had followed the first days of their delight in each other, the diminution of endearment, the first yielding to irritability, the evenings he had spent doggedly working, resisting all his sense of her presence. 'One cannot always be lovemaking,' he had said, and so - they were slipping apart...
>
> But how to get back to the old footing? how to efface the things he had said, the things that had been done?
>
> Could they get it back?
>
> For a moment he faced a new possibility. Suppose they could not get back! Suppose the mischief was done! Suppose that when he slammed the door behind him it locked, and was locked against him for ever!
>
> 'But we must!' said Lewisham, 'we must!'[1]

1. H.G. Wells, Love and Mr. Lewisham, Literary Press, London, p. 216

It should not be necessary to unravel the analogy. (Søren Kierkegaard's analogy of the king who loved a maiden should be an adequate hermeneutic for it.) There are, however, three essential elements in the above extract, often neglected in theological discussions of love, which demand integration. The first is an aphoristic definition, indeed, a definition of love: "...something more ancient and more imperative than reason." The second is the single word "tenderness". The third is a special kind of repentance arising from the insight that authentic justice is required in every human relationship.

If, as I have suggested, it is not advisable nor even possible to draw definitive distinctions between the many different forms of love, it may still be admissible to offer some broad and general principles upon which future love-talk in Christian theology might be based. The three essential characteristics just noted may provide the initial frameword or 'guidelines' for a theology of love which continues to develop theoretically in correspondence with God's call for justice and Christ's command: "Dwell in my love...love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:9 ff.)

The 'thesis' we have been exploring is just this proposition, that only by the practice of loving one another do we fully "dwell" in the love of Christ and in the love of God. Theology, therefore, is challenged to take seriously the task of loving; any theory of the love of God requires to be related intimately to the loves of humanity, and love of the neighbour as oneself. An implicit and indispensable relationship between human love and the love of God is proclaimed in this logion of Jesus (John 15:9 ff). The love of Christ is not essentially different from the love of God; as humans keep the commandment to love each other, their loves too may represent divine love.

This representation, in human guise, of God's love may imply an important human identity with the divine love, yet without

the same mass or quantity. The intuition of an identity between divine love and human love at its best is often implied in the use of the Greek word agape. Martin Luther and Anders Nygren, in our study, attempted to suggest the unalienated communication of divine love through human beings in virtue of faith. Through faith, they insisted, the quality of divine love and human love becomes one unified expression. Emil Brunner went so far as to assert that it is faith that is commanded, and that from faith love spontaneously proceeds. But, as Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Barth observed, an insistence upon faith may have the effect of inserting an alienating a priori into the love command, so that love, in effect, becomes a function of faith, and subordinate to it.

Whereas Nygren suggested that faith removes the qualitative dissimilarity between divine and human love, Kierkegaard and Barth maintained that God's love is always different in quality from the human's inadequate loves. Despite Kierkegaard's radical emphasis upon faith, he finally affirmed that "truly, a profession of faith is not enough."[1] That is, humanity is so prone to selfish loves that not even faith can guarantee that one's love is correlative with the love commanded by Christ, and with the love of God. There remains a qualitative difference.

This debate will continue. I have suggested that whenever human beings love their neighbour justly, passionately, in identification with the God-created 'self' in the neighbour, then there is indeed a qualitative identity between the love of God and the human love expressed. But God's love must also be conceived in such vast effectiveness, that one must not be too quick to discount a certain divinity in those 'lesser' loves which are somewhat exclusive, somewhat self-centred, and somewhat unjust. Whitehead's exposition of eros demonstrates the range and vitality of God's love

1. Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 344

operating toward a specific purpose even in the loves which are entwined with evil. One must not be so strenuous in defining the love of God to imply that it is not capable of being expressed in the erotic loves of romance, marriage, friendship, and group consciousness. On the other hand, the love of Christ "impels us" to make our loves more inclusive, better attuned to the harmony of all, and genuinely expressive of the greatest possible justice in each relationship.

In response to the question: "Can human love be the love of God?", I would suggest that the answer is yes, always; and no, never. To some degree, the love of God in its creative and nurturing capacity is present in every selfish love, urging each organism on to greater possibilities. At the same time, the greatest possibilities of any single organism or group of organisms can never hope to encompass or fully express the infinite redemptive and transforming influence of God's love. Perhaps there is always similarity and dissimilarity, as a drop of sea-water is and is not the ocean.

The most enlightening implications from the various authors who have contributed to this symposium may be outlined under the following headings.

1. "...Something More Ancient and More Imperative than Reason."

We begin with Wells' 'definition' of love. Of course no definition can be assumed to be exhaustive. We recall Kierkegaard's foreword to Works of Love: "That which in its vast abundance is essentially inexhaustible is also essentially indescribable in its smallest act, simply because essentially it is everywhere wholly present and essentially cannot be described". We recall also Seward Hiltner's remark that there is in the idea of love the intuition of "some kind of unity" which integrates and reconciles apparent opposites, encompassing myriad diversities in universal scope.

Our study began with the attempts of the early Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach to posit love as the 'spirit' or 'essence' of Christianity. Love, they suggested, is the inherent truth of Christian Incarnation theory, and the authentic content of Christianity, since faith statements sublimate belief in love. Doctrinal statements about the incarnated God, they suggested, say nothing about the ontological nature of the divine being, but they say a great deal about the human being, Dasein, existing in time and space, suffering pain and frustration, yet hopeful in grasping love as the highest manifestation of human nature.

Both the early Hegel and Feuerbach, like Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and numerous nineteenth-century philosophers, reacted strongly to the over-emphasis upon reason which was the legacy of Descartes, Kant, and the general tendency of the Enlightenment. The later Hegel, however, attempted in his 'system' to enfold reason and love, and all matter and experience in a comprehensive, quasi-Platonic cosmic 'mind' (Geist). To several of the nineteenth century thinkers, Hegel's system was less than satisfactory, due to its speculative implications. In a sense, they thought, Hegel had inverted his early emphasis upon love and feeling (i.e. 'stood on his head') by proclaiming that a speculative, universal 'mind' was able to transcend and encompass human consciousness and rationality. Due to the survival of Hegel's early manuscripts, his students who found more insight in his 'youthful' talk about love than in his later system called themselves "Young Hegelians" and formed a tiny nucleus of a movement which eventually was to play an important role in fashioning new models for history. Feuerbach was their first inspiration, but was reluctant to become their leader.[1]

A great deal of modern love-theory is somewhat dependent upon the debates of the early nineteenth century. Our contemporary

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1. cf. above Chapter 1.

discussions of I and thou, of 'Dasein', of religion as an opiate and as an illusion, of phenomenology, of experience, of Christian 'anthropology', of subconscious 'feeling', of 'praxis', ideology, materialism, imagination, and epistemology have roots in the early nineteenth century intuition and philosophical development of love's existential primacy over reason. By talking about love, not reason, as the 'spirit' of Christianity, Hegel opened a door which could not be closed. Schleiermacher's and Feuerbach's extrapolation of the depths of feeling, feeling which senses in others of a common species such affinity that oneself is thereby disclosed, without dependence upon rationality and consciousness, has led to diverse theories about love, as well as numerous other aspects of social existence. A veritable 'Pandora's Box' seemed to be opened once thinkers began to investigate the things that lie beneath consciousness and thought. In the process, the dynamics of religion came to incorporate a convenient model for philosophical analysis. Feuerbach used it as an analytical vehicle for the exposition of feeling in contrast to reason. The essence of Christianity was not discoverable "within the bounds of reason alone", but only with reference to the general pervasiveness of the feeling of love, the greatest exponent of human sensucusness and supra-rationality: belief, compassion, and imagination. Love, for Feuerbach, was not only the essence of Christianity, but also of all individual and corporate humanity. Love was acknowledged to be material in quality, the 'substance' by which the individual consciousness becomes self-conscious of species existence. The implications of this community-oriented, material, phenomenclogically grounded love Feuerbach did not fully pursue. But where Feuerbach left off, Karl Marx began; Feuerbach's interpretation demanded, for Marx, a transforming human practice if the greatest possibilities of unalienated human feeling (Sinnlichkeit) were to find relevance in history.

Somewhat similar to the early nineteenth century emphasis on love as an activity of feeling undetermined by consciousness and reason is Alfred North Whitehead's broad characterization of *eros*. Whitehead's overtly Platonic account of love as an energy which synthesizes all experience recalls Plato's attempts to elevate the idea of love from the purvey of vulgar sexuality and the mystery religions. In his notion of *eros* Whitehead attempted to make the whole universe intimately related to each occasion of experience, as it builds upon a perishing past to provide the foundations for a less frustrated and more beautiful future. But Whitehead also reminds us somewhat of the later Hegel, the Hegel who posited the notion of a universal 'mind'. For Whitehead, that mind was not so rational as loving. Instead of a universal mind, we are asked to envision the activity of a universal love, luring all life to itself, in greater harmony with all successive creation, and preserving each individual love in an 'ocean of feeling'.

Feuerbach insisted on beginning with being itself, *Dasein*, not the idea of being. Hegel, too, in his early years, considered individual feeling and love from a strictly phenomenological frame of reference. But where Hegel was constrained to take the individual toward the universal by grounding individual phenomena in ontology, Feuerbach refused to pursue the loves of existence beyond time and space. Nevertheless he insisted on using transcendent terms, like "infinite" and "divine", in his 'materialist' exposition of love. Whitehead, however, in starting not with matter or mind, but rather with the single occasion of experience, was able to trace the 'feeling' of the single experience to the fulfilment of God, the universal lure and reservoir of love.

I have not disguised my conviction that Whitehead's account of love as "the *eros* of the universe", has much to offer Christian theology. Because it is more inclusive than Feuerbach's love demanding the exclusion of God, yet even *more* phenomenological at the

base of feeling and experience, overcoming the apparent dualism between mind and matter without over-emphasizing consciousness and reason, Whitehead's love-theory seems to supersede Hegel and Feuerbach.

Each of the three have played an important role in acknowledging love's ancient and indispensable impact upon human existence in countless ways which lie obscured from strictly rational investigation. Modern sciences have just begun to explore some of the primitive effects and inter-related social dynamics caused by sheer feeling, and especially that vague range of feelings called love. The activity and importance of feeling is no longer a theory opposed to the theory of consciousness. Our century has witnessed repeated investigations into the unconscious receptive life of humans, to require speculative assessments and even more metaphysical theories before we can call such theories 'facts'. Without a doubt, however, the effects of feeling and love in human behaviour and human relations will be indispensable to the psychology, sociology, medicine, and philosophy of the future.

Any theology which ignores the ancient imperative of feeling and love is sure to lose relevance to, and influence upon, an increasingly complex and sophisticated world. The pretensions of theology to rational and 'scientific' method, to strictly doctrinal formulations ignoring the pluralism of the world, and to systematic discussions which prejudice results may ignore the ancient authentic appeal of religion in every age; not the skeleton of logic, but the flesh and blood of human needs, emotion, imagination, and love.

If theology can conceive of love as "some kind of unity", a creative force or master genetic principle linking all specific life forms, and indeed, all matter and experience, then there should be no need to perpetuate the divisive and dualistic definitions of "Christian" love which have been popular in our century. There is no longer the necessity to vindicate agape over eros. The meaning

which Plotinus and the neo-Platonists applied to love as eros is neither consistent with Plato nor obviously relevant to the contemporary understanding of love. As Karl Barth admitted, the neo-orthodox theologians were "a little late" with their protest.

In considering the meanings of eros in use today, variant interpretations must be distinguished. Eros may imply either a universal life-force, a neo-platonist type of spirituality, or an individual "pleasure principle". I have suggested that Whitehead's broad social interpretation offers the best theological basis for perpetuation of the term.

With a thorough reading of Plato, supplemented by a study of Whitehead, Darwin, and a visit to any museum of Natural History, one certainly might make a good argument that agape, philia and all the other kinds of love are derivations of and contained within eros. But this argument too might lead to divisiveness, perhaps even to a preference for 'natural theology' over the revelation of the Incarnation. At any event, if agape is to be perpetuated as a special, even technical, word for Christian love, and if eros is today a word abused after Freudian psychoanalytic theory, but meaning generally a 'life-force', then there ought to be some interrelation between them if theology's love-talk has any bearing at all upon theories of evolution, genetics, and relativity.

Such a relationship, I suspect, may be found in the writings of Karl Barth. Barth has demonstrated that a doctrine of creation need not be opposed to God's continuous nurture and reconciling action throughout the contingency of time and space. For Barth, the acquisitiveness of eros is no less a part of God's creation throughout nature than the self-giving of agape is a part of his salvation and election of human nature. Barth's emphasis upon a creative and redemptive grace, present already in the Hebrew covenant and culminating in the Incarnation and Atonement, but not beginning there, suggests a broader view of Christian agape which seems to

be required if God's love and its correlative in human life is to be consistent with continuous creation.

Nygren's view of agape, as I have shown, is much too narrow because (1) it is dualistic and exclusive of all loves which do not fit into Nygren's definition; (2) it misrepresents important biblical usage; and (3) it finds no place for appropriate response to God's creative love outwith faith in Christ or prior to the Incarnation.

Barth understood, whereas Nygren did not, that the history of the Covenant and the Torah had the capacity, even within the context of law, to promote justice in the authentic response of neighbourly love (cf. Leviticus 19:18,33). Nygren excluded all forms of law (nomos) from agape, insisting that it be 'spontaneous', 'unconditional', and 'unmotivated'. Inherent in his Lutheran interpretation was the assumption that the Fall had rendered obedience to the law impossible, so that there could be "no way of man to God". While we might not quarrel with this interpretation so far as it originates with St. Paul, the effect of the Fall, stated in this form, may be to cut God off from his own role as creator. In contrast, Barth suggested, "every abyss...has a bottom somewhere." That 'bottom', for Barth, was the foundation of grace: the totally creative, nurturing, transforming, redemptive, reconciling, electing, and continuously active love of God, which humanity does not have the capacity, ultimately, to alienate.[1]

While Barth indeed used the term agape to suggest the self-giving love of humans which correlates with God's own love, he did not use the term in a manner which excludes God's potential influence in other loves. He affirmed, for example, the eros of marriage, and admitted that non-Christians often love more appropriately in

1. It has been argued however, that Barth's doctrine of Creation may be subordinated to his Christology. cf. G. Wingren, Theology in Conflict, op. cit. pp. 33 ff. Barth's later writings may ameliorate this criticism.

correspondence to agape than do Christians. Nevertheless, for Barth, agape represented that special word of the Lord to his Church, calling forth authentic loving relations between Christians as a witness and an example to the world.

Whatever meanings may be attributed to agape in the theology of the future, any assumption of its 'purity' or self-evident connotation apart from a specific context is a misconception from which theology has suffered long enough. Modern textual analysis of the word in the New Testament has clearly shown that derivatives of agape and philein are often used without discrimination. Although the common word for love was no longer eros in koine Greek, other words were still evolving. Even if Paul was able to use the term agape consistently, possibly because it was simply the word most often used between the 'I' and 'thou' of first century Asia Minor, other New Testament writers were less consistent. It is clear, however, that neither eros, nor philia (except at James 4:4, with reference to the LXX), are used in the New Testament.[1] Much more research will be required to be conclusive, but the simplest reasons suggested are (1) the words were no longer in common use, and (2) they were, at any event, now associated with philosophical 'technical' meanings, and their use might be confusing.

The implication for love-talk, from both contemporary usage of the word eros, and etymological research into biblical origins, suggests that language will continue to discover the ineffable in the idea of love. Wherever a characteristic of love is revealed which is nameless, humanity struggles to 'name the whirlwind'. It is named creatively, but also inadequately, because names for love are based upon the feeling which it generates, and there is just enough difference in common feeling to lead to a slight redefinition in the imagination of each one who perceives it and tries

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1. cf. Victor Paul Furnish, The Love Command in the New Testament, op. cit. pp. 219 ff.

once more to give it appropriate and meaningful expression. Love's 'imperative' is always a little beyond our grasp by thought and reason, yet evident and active wherever two or three are gathered.

The struggle to give names to various forms of love may be analogous to the classical western tendency to interpret the harmony of music in relatively arbitrary distinctions of notes, keys, time signatures, and certain forms for symphonies, sonatas, and concertos. Although a specific note, for example, has a character of its own, we often forget that each particular note is somewhat arbitrarily specified, and that its character is determined by its relation to others, and to the whole key in which it exists. In addition, whether it is played staccato or legato, pianissimo or fortissimo, as a single note or as part of a chord, on a stringed or wind instrument, further illustrates the range of 'identity' possible to any single note. The analogy suggests that the identification of one 'type' of love is rather an arbitrary exercise.

Plato often compared love to music. Socrates' famous conversation with Phaedrus was accompanied by a "choir of cicalas".[1] Music, Eryximachus was made to assert in the Symposium, originates from the same source as love. Agathon, following Eryximachus' speech, tells us that "love sings to all things which live and are, soothing the troubled minds of Gods and men."[2] But whereas Eryximachus and Agathon wished to construe love essentially by its capacity to promote harmony, Socrates, in relating the oracle of Diotima, observes that love may often be involved in apparent disharmony, discord, while only a particular 'species of love' tends to be associated with the obvious beauty and harmony of music; "one portion or species of poetry, that which has relation to music and rhythm, is divided from all others, and known by the name belonging to all."[3] In our descriptions of love, Diotima informed Socrates, "we select a

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1. Plato, Phaedrus, 230
2. Plato, The Symposium, 197
3. ibid. 205

particular species of love, and apply to it distinctively, the appellation of that which is universal."[1] Theories of love stressing one "species" only may imply the relation of a tuning fork to an orchestra...pertinent, but arbitrary and deficient.

Countless modern instruments and voices bear witness to the world's conviction that "soft stillness and the night become the touches of sweet harmony." On every airwave "the sounds of music creep in our ears" as they attempt to

> ...wake Diana with a hymn...
> And draw her home with music.[2]

The intuitions 'felt' in love and music are not rationally reducible. Lovers, like Lorenzo and Jessica in The Merchant of Venice, are receptive to the sounds of music, and in it, a sense of harmony, even if they are ignorant of music theory. Together, reclining on a grassy bank, they wonder at the harmony of the universe.

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
> Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
> Become the touches of sweet harmony...
>
> Such harmony is in immortal souls,
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth close it in, we cannot hear it.[3]

In all this harmony, we can almost hear Plato's "choir of cicalas", as Socrates instructs Phaedrus in the art of love.

> All that is soul presides over all that is without soul, and patrols all heaven, now appearing in one form and now in another. When it is perfect and fully feathered it roams in upper air, and regulates the entire universe; but the soul that has lost its feathers is carried down till it finds some solid resting place...with the addition of the epithet mortal. The immortal, on the other hand has received its name from the conclusion of no human reasoning.[4]
>
> Now of that region beyond the sky no earthly bard has ever yet sung, or ever will sing in worthy strains.[5]

Thus love's relationships abound: music, poetry, romantic

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1. ibid.
2. William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, Act 5, Scene 1.
3. ibid.
4. Plato, Phaedrus, 246
5. ibid, 247

love, friendship, the harmony of the universe, the depths of silence, and intimations of God and immortality. Discord too plays its part in a greater whole, for given a certain appreciation, "the crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark." Only from the periphery of darkness may we see "how far that little candle throws its beams". In the imagery of love and music, justice may be viewed from a different perspective: "So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

The madness of love, Plato declared, has vision, intensity, and integrity unshared with rationality, but somewhat shared with the sense by which humans appreciate the profound, ineffable, interior relationships of music and poetry. "The poetry of sense fades into obscurity before the poetry of madness." The integrating faculty of love, like music, intuits what reason cannot think, for "such a madness as this was given by God to man for his highest possible happiness."[1]

"God has loves, not reasons," wrote Father Robert Farrer Capon.[2] We need not assume that his loves are illogical or irrational, but neither must we too quickly give to the minimal objectivity of our limited rational minds that which is essentially unlimited. Love is more approachable, perhaps, by what we as human beings innately feel, creatively imagine, and intuitively suspect. To fit the idea of love, either human or divine, into any objective system is to pollute the holy. Theology, if it is to be theo-logical, must take care not to set up artificial barriers rationally determined either by the past or the theories of the present. For in many respects, we are still trying to scratch the surface of an eminently indestructible and dense alloy, which, while exerting its immeasurable magnetic pull upon us due to its indeterminable mass, is somewhat opaque to our direct analysis. Perhaps the best we can do is to observe

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1. ibid, 245
2. Robert Farrer Capon, The Supper of the Lamb, op. cit. p. 84

the effect of its magnitude, the feelings generated in ourselves and the responses in our fellow creatures, as it pulls us, like a giant magnet collecting iron filings, closer to itself, and simultaneously, closer to each other.

Through all the philosophical and poetic talk of love there lies beneath the logic and the music a certain intuition of transcendence, which, since the dawn of history, has been expressed as religion. Fertility goddesses, creation myths, and cultic worship in every age have persistently connected the intuitions in loving with 'heights beyond which block our vision'.

St. Augustine's view of caritas remains an indomitable, and in many ways profoundly relevant 'synthesis' of interrelated 'love-motifs'. As Nygren correctly concluded, it is not limited to the New Testament milieu. But so far from attenuating the idea of love, as Nygren alleged, St. Augustine set for theology an indispensable precedent for thinking about love in transcendent terms.

Luther also, an Augustinian scholar in his own right, emphasized many ideas of the Bishop of Hippo, while leaving aside certain allusions which seemed to him self-contradictory. Luther himself, however, lacked the sort of comprehensive consistency we have today come to expect from theologians. He was capable of cold analysis and eloquent passion, ruthless assertion as well as 'divine madness'. Luther was no systematician. Like Augustine, his works may be turned to serve various view-points. Nygren's interpretation of Luther is not the only possible one; as we have noticed, Feuerbach, Kierkegaard, Brunner, and Niebuhr were all 'Lutheran' scholars, and all incorporated certain views of Luther in their interpretations of love. It is reductive of Luther to interpret all his statements, as it is of St. Paul, according to the hermeneutic of 'faith alone'. Luther did not suggest that love for God may be contained within the response of faith, according to the suggestion of Nygren. He was far too much an Augustinian to hold such a view consistently, even though

he did indeed suggest that faith enables appropriate love for God:

> For since by faith the soul is cleansed and made a lover of God, it desires that all things, and especially its own body, shall be as pure as itself, so that all things may join with it in loving and praising God.[1]

Nor did Luther completely divorce the idea of obedience from the 'spontaneity' of faith:

> Hence a man cannot be idle, because the need of his body drives him and he is compelled to do many good works to reduce it to subjection. Nevertheless the works themselves do not justify him before God, but he does the works out of spontaneous love in obedience to God, and considers nothing except the approval of God, whom he would in all things most scrupulously obey.[2]

We observe in the above quotation the juxtaposition of the word 'spontaneous' with the words 'compelled' and 'obedience'. The neo-orthodox view that only 'spontaneity' is an adequate modifier of love is not here reconcilable with Luther's position. Kierkegaard's interpretation of Luther on this point is more apt than Nygren's and Brunner's, and we shall return to it shortly.

Despite the good intentions of Nygren and neo-orthodox Protestants in liberating theology from rationalism, Kantian ethics, liberalism, fundamentalism, private piety, mysticism, and works righteousness, their emphasis upon a latter day interpretation of faith in connection with spontaneous love did not make 'Christian love' purer nor were they able to show that faith can guarantee the 'type' of love enjoined by Christ. Through most of the neo-orthodox interpretation of love ran the radically dualistic assertion of Luther that only the human being who "by faith is created in the likeness of God" is capable of appropriate and genuine love. As Barth came to acknowledge, partly from an awareness of Feuerbach's allegation that such a faith is a contradiction of love, "one may no longer repeat these things from Luther without some caution."

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1. Martin Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty, op. cit. p. 54
2. ibid.

I have already alluded to the impact that such an exclusive view of love may have upon the activity of God throughout all creation, and upon God's capacity for patient nurture and love even for 'fallen' human nature. With regard for this concern, I suggested that the Fall of Cain is a better paradigm than the Fall of Adam. Whereas Adam's sin was a revolt against God, for which he was peremptorily banished from the Garden of God's nurture, Cain's sin was even greater. It was a revolt against his brother, a selfish jealous rage of fratricide. Yet his self-condemnation was denied by God, and he departed with the mark of God's protection and nurture, to 'seek the face of God' by discovering in the social relations of craft and culture, what it might mean to be 'his brother's keeper'.

Although faith may indeed play a role in helping us to discover what it means to be our brothers' keepers, with God's nurture, in the city of Cain, it cannot be the primary key to which all loves are subjected or which 'activates' the love of God. Both Barth's view of grace, and certain interpretations of the traditional grace of Roman Catholicism, 'comprehend' faith without making it love's prerequisite. Complementary may be Whitehead's emphasis upon 'persuasion', which, as an eminent form of <u>eros</u>, is also an expression of God's providence enabling just and peaceful social relations in a frustrated world. While neither faith nor love is capable of containment within the bounds of reason alone, an exclusive 'type' of love dependent upon faith may militate against that infinitely inclusive love proclaimed in the 'word' of grace.

With the hermeneutic of the small word 'grace', theology's 'love' has the capacity to challenge all other views and interpretations. Proclaiming this word of grace, in hope, theologians may claim that they speak with authority about love, as in humility they identify the different levels in which the word is operative. From the beginning, pervasive to the end, there surely <u>is</u> that word: "something more ancient and more imperative than reason."

2. "Tenderness"

> It is the business of philosophical theology to provide a rational understanding of the rise of civilization, and of the tendernesses of mere life itself, in a world which superficially is founded upon the clashings of senseless compulsion. I am not disguising my belief that in this task, theology has largely failed. The notion of the absolute despot has stood in the way. The doctrine of Grace has been degraded...[1]

In Whitehead's philosophy the idea of eros finds its final 'concrescence' in a cosmic tenderness, "a tender care that nothing be lost."[2] Through the profoundly human, yet universally transcendent experience of tenderness, "life includes a mode of satisfaction deeper than joy or sorrow."[3] "This is the notion of redemption through suffering, which haunts the world."[4] It seems to represent a significant part of Whitehead's attempt to correct the doctrine of grace, by making the quality of God's redemption of the universe common, to some extent, in every organism. Because God includes, and is identified with every experience, every feeling, he is "the fellow sufferer who understands."[5]

Many of the theologians contributing to our symposium have attempted to stress that aspect of love which Whitehead calls tenderness. They have done it in different ways, using different words, although it is difficult to think of an adequate synonym. Generally the word implies vulnerability, susceptibility to pain or grief, affection and care, particularly associated with an identification of feeling between two or more individuals.

Whitehead's idea of tenderness seems to have been a complement of the word 'zest'. Perhaps between these two principles, each difficult to define yet intrinsic to the nature, not only of humanity, but also to all existence, there is a dynamic polarity producing

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1. Alfred North Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 218
2. Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit. p. 490
3. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 221
4. Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit. p. 495
5. ibid. p. 497

the field of 'energy' which human beings experience as love. We have already noticed the broad acquisitive 'urge' of eros and its adventure in search of intensity of experience, feeling, and beauty. But this 'zest' in all life is sustained, must be 'disciplined' or restrained at many points. Eros unleashed may be even a greater tragedy for history and civilization than eros maimed. Tenderness is a balance to zest which is too often impulsive, overconstructive, and thereby destructive.[1]

Whitehead, like most of the theologians we have considered, found a model for the idea of tenderness in the Galilean images of Christianity:

> The Mother, the Child, and the bare manger: the lowly man, homeless and self-forgetful, with his message of peace, love and sympathy; the suffering, the agony, the tender words as life ebbed, the final despair, and the whole with the authority of supreme victory.[2]

These images are so identified with the experience of the mass of humanity that they have often "evoked a response from all that is best in human nature."[3]

The latent truth in the images of Christianity led Feuerbach to the conviction that "God is a heart". Humanity is by nature so attuned to the images of feeling - compassion, forgiveness, emotion, and suffering, for example - that only a God who expresses these truths has credibility for human existence. Thus, the God defined as omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, and impassible is no God. For Feuerbach, the images of the Incarnation express a human God, overflowing with feeling and tenderness. It has been noted that the concept of God in regard to which Feuerbach was atheistic was not the Christian God at all, but rather the formulation of a certain medieval 'school'. As Manfred Vogel observed, "Feuerbach is the

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1. The polarity between 'zest' and 'tenderness' is not specifically suggested by Whitehead. It is, however, a deduction derivable from Adventures of Ideas, especially the final chapter on "Peace".
2. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas, op. cit. p. 214
3. ibid.

great anti-theologian only if we equate theology generally with the neo-platonic, idealist formulation."[1] Vogel is only partially correct. While Feuerbach's critique is certainly of an 'obsolete' concept of God, he also questioned the necessity for any God at all outside the experience of love common to human beings existing in time and finite conditions. Nevertheless, he was willing to call that phenomenological epiphany of feelings 'divine', while continuing to insist upon their phenomenological analysis. Reversing subject and predicate, Feuerbach said that "love is God". He did not mean by this, however, that love is the origin of all things, or the supra-historical redeemer of humanity. His interpretation of love was phenomenologically, not ontologically, orientated. Redemption was a programme for humanity, but in this world alone, a communitarian self-redemption achievable precisely through those 'divine' attributes of human nature which theology, before his time, was not able to consider fully nor effectively inspire. Those attributes which he identified as eminently indispensable to human nature and a "species-consciousness" were the tender ones: not power, production, and control, but compassion, suffering, and love. These attributes lay hidden in the human imagination capable of conceiving and believing in a human, suffering God.

Søren Kierkegaard, far from denying the tender elements which Feuerbach identified as 'divine', in fact heightened them. Kierkegaard attempted to reconcile faith with the highest and most genuine 'passion' in human nature: love for God. In many ways, Kierkegaard answered Feuerbach's critique of theology by showing that God's omnipotence might be reconciled with his love for humanity, precisely in his "omnipotent love", breaking down the barriers which prevent humans from loving him, as well as their fellows. By loving God, and by sensing in that love a "duty" to love one's neighbour,

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1. Manfred Vogel, "The Barth-Feuerbach Confrontation", Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 59, p. 27

human passion is fulfilled and attains an 'eternal' quality. Kierkegaard depicted the infinite intensity of God's passion for humanity: "The love that gives all is itself in want." God not only suffers what humans suffer, but he suffers incommensurably because of his greatness. His 'Absolute' character implies absolute suffering, as well as an absolute love which relates itself absolutely, to the human condition. By commanding that humans love their neighbours, God provides the key to authentic loves throughout the human temporal condition. God becomes the "third party" in every relationship, and constitutes, in essence, the very love itself with which human beings genuinely love others, and in the process, love themselves rightly. Kierkegaard, like Feuerbach, had no qualms about asserting, "Love is God." But for Kierkegaard, the expression had an eternal and "essentially inexhaustible" significance, illustrating the absoluteness as well as the relatedness of the divine passion.

In the feelings of tenderness through which human relations develop, there arises also the question of self-love. For the early Hegel, self-love was "a word without meaning", probably because it did not fit very well into Hegel's developing theory of epistemology. While Augustine used the term in various contexts, Luther would not allow it at all. Both Feuerbach and Kierkegaard, however, acknowledged the necessity for human beings to find in themselves that which is worthy of love.

In Feuerbach's view, one must identify the 'self' in the 'thou', the other person, by identifying with the other's feelings, sufferings, and experiences, which inform the identification and revelation of oneself. Self-knowledge arises through communion with others; by loving others the 'I' discovers itself: "The love of others tells you what you are." Then, in recognition that the other loves himself, and loves himself justly, the 'I' learns to love itself appropriately:

> If you simply condemn egoism, that is, self-love, then you must also condemn, consequently, the love for others. Love is good will and good behaviour toward others, therefore, to recognize the just self-love of another. Why then will you deny for yourself what you acknowledge in others?[1]

Kierkegaard acknowledges that right self-love is an indispensable antidote for its opposite, despair. His theory of self-love is not totally consistent, or at least it is fully paradoxical. In some ways it represents St. Augustine's theory that only by denying oneself in love for God does one truly love oneself rightly. But for Kierkegaard there is, particularly in his later works, an imperative to love one's neighbour as oneself, and both in the correct relationship to God. With this imperative Kierkegaard develops St. Augustine's repeated intimation that the self and the neighbour are equal before God. "You shall love your self as you love your neighbour when you love him as yourself." Kierkegaard declared.[2] Such a statement is not transparent apart from the context of Kierkegaard's thought. What he seems to mean is that the love of neighbour is commanded in "the royal law", while self-love is only the measure of the command. The neighbour is to be loved first, and the self without egocentrism in deference to the neighbour. Only by loving one's neighbour selflessly can one, in fact, love oneself rightly. The paradoxical theme of selfhood, of proper and improper self love, is a constant topic for Kierkegaard. Loving one's neighbour as oneself is both the evidence and the preservative of faith. Characteristically ambiguous, implying the 'Paradox' with which Kierkegaard's writings are often concerned, is his final paragraph in The Sickness unto Death:

> "By relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the Power which constituted it." And this formula, as has often been noted, is the definition of faith.[3]

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1. Feuerbach, The Diary, Werke, op. cit. Band 2, p. 413 (My translation; cf. above, p. 147)
2. Soren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, op. cit. p. 39
3. Kierkegaard, The Sickness unto Death, op. cit. p. 262

An appropriate and balanced self-concept, indeed something resembling 'self-love', seems to be required in the future development of love by Christian theology. Augustine's use of the terms amor sui and cupiditas, however, have set a difficult precedent for theology. As Oliver O'Donovan has observed, it is hardly possible to speak of one meaning of the term self-love for St. Augustine.[1] Inherent in the modern use of the term lie such diverse related concepts as eudaemonia and utilitarianism, epistemology, Freudian psychoanalysis, the ethics of egoism, and of course, all the extrapolations of pride, hubris, epithumia, and egotism denounced by Christian ethics. Also complicating the issue is much narcissistic popular psychology and theology, prevalent now in the United States and Europe, which stress the ideas of 'assertiveness' and individual liberation. The sort of individualism which fills a yearning for personal freedoms is not, we can certainly conclude, equivalent to the sort of self-love that either Augustine, Feuerbach, or Kierkegaard wished to affirm. But on the other hand, the 'culture of narcissism,' perpetuated by increasing mobility and communication in our world, may be the evidence of a wide, if frustrated, search for love on many levels.

Theologians may need to speak again of a 'proper' self-love, perhaps not so 'vertical' as that of St. Augustine, so epistemological as that of Feuerbach, nor so paradoxical as that of Kierkegaard. The term itself is with us; theology can only hope to correct and enrich it by setting it in the context of other loves and informing it with the insights of the Gospel. We must no longer be afraid of it. Any pastor who deals with the tragedies of personal, familial, and social frustrations, who visits in a mental hospital, or is called to counsel a person on the point of suicide whould be able to recognize the need for it, and also its abuse. The sin of pride is still rampant, but at the same time we must be able to encourage a proper

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1. cf. Oliver O'Donovan, The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine, op. cit. p. 137

pride in achievements, vocation, and talents.

The search for self-love, and for a definitive explanation of it, will continue. For the moment, however, I can only note its abuse and endorse its necessity. It is an immature, impulsive, yet indispensable aspect of love's survival mechanism, and also an inhibiting "tenderness" by which, identifying oneself in the neighbour's needs and feelings, self-love joyfully finds itself in selfless love.

The tenderness in the New Testament accounts of Jesus' relations with real men and women, so often touching and beckoning the deepest intuitions of humanity about the nature of love, is itself complicated by what seems to be a contradiction, a paradox, or perhaps, a kind of polarity. Is the character of this tenderness that of 'spontaneity' or 'duty'? The question is posed by the Bible itself. To what extent is 'antinomianism' legitimate for Christians? Does the love of Christ "impel us" or "compel us" (2 Cor. 5:14)? Did Jesus actually "command" that we love, or was he merely quoting the Old Testament? Answers to such questions have filled volumes, yet so far, there is no theological agreement about the relationship of law and love.

"Of course love cannot be commanded," wrote Hegel. Yet Kierkegaard responded that it is indeed the command which supersedes all others. If love is primarily feeling, and if obedience to a command requires some rational intellect by which the command is understood, then it would seem that a commanded love subjects love to the faculty of reason. Spontaneous love, on the other hand, issues forth in an overflow of feeling or (com)passion, without needing any command. But so are many other kinds of emotional expression 'spontaneous', and often they are characterized by impulsiveness, caprice, and undependability. Again we must observe the need for some discipline in loving if our loves are to be effective in promoting justice or increasing <u>com</u>passion in a world assailed by indulgence of passion.

"Truly," concluded Kierkegaard, "a profession of faith is not

enough." The love for one's neighbour cannot, by faith, be assumed to be spontaneous. Egocentrism is a constant threat to the appropriate love of others, of God, and of oneself. By taking the commandment to love seriously, authentic love may be preserved in its 'eternal' quality. Selfish loves, exclusive of one's neighbour, may be identified and corrected by 'obedience' to the royal law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength...You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:29-31). For Kierkegaard, spontaneity in loving could never be assumed, but nevertheless might arise as one becomes more and more "intimate" with the commandment.

Nygren, Brunner, Barth, and many of the Latin American liberation theologians, however, have generally affirmed love's spontaneity and denied any affiliation with duty, obedience, obligation, or law. Those who have read Kierkegaard on the matter have, I suspect, failed to understand him adequately. In the background of the duty-spontaneity anthithesis Immanuel Kant is more often visualized than Kierkegaard. Theologians unwilling to accept Kant's "categorical imperative" for Christian ethics, have usually affirmed the spontaneity of Christian love over against any conception of duty derivable from rational moral principles. Also in the background is the Pauline literature, which after Luther, has so often been subjected to the hermeneutic of "faith alone". The Christian ethics derivable from the Pauline - Lutheran theology have, perhaps too often, led theologians, like Nygren, Brunner, and to some extent, Reinhold Niebuhr, to the assumption that law, and the justice which it attempts to effect, are antithetical to Christian "spontaneous" love.

The theological affirmation of spontaneity must not be dismissed, however, for theology has too often attempted to define behaviour appropriate for Christians according to legal principles, with the result that love is not informed by law, but rather reduced to it.

Particularly flagrant in this regard have been Roman Catholic Canon Law, Reformed Protestant doctrine, and numerous types of fundamentalism. If we are to suggest an appropriate relation of love to law, or of spontaneity to duty, we must be careful not to fall again into legalism and a 'Gospel' of nomos.

There are convincing biblical grounds for the conclusion that authentic human love, correlating with that tender love disclosed in the ministry of Jesus, is both a 'duty' and a spontaneous 'feeling'. One of the unique aspects of the Christian religion is that its founder not only advised, but commanded a 'feeling', which is not ordinarily commandable. "Thou shalt love" requires a certain kind of listening if we are to have ears to hear it and a sensitive imaginative intellect if we are to conceive such a task and obey it.

The dual command, to love God, and the neighbour as oneself, is directly derived from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:14; Leviticus 19:18,33). As such, it is set within the context, not only of Old Testament law, but also the Old Testament Covenant. It is a command which entails the idea of justice, as in equality with oneself, the neighbour shall be loved. For God makes his rain fall on self and neighbour, friend and foe alike, without distinction and without preferences.

The command to love God implies that God is worthy of human love, and need not be obeyed from a motivation of fear. For Jesus God was "Abba", a loving father who senses his children's needs before they ask. The command is not "Believe!" but rather "Love!" For Jesus and his Palestinian contemporaries, belief in God was not an issue. But whether God should be obeyed out of fear or out of love was indeed an issue, as Rabbinic sources intimate. Jesus opted for love. The command to love God cannot be reduced to a profession of faith, first, because faith in itself is no antidote to the worship of a fearful despot, and second, because the 'vertical' relationship it implies is no guarantee that the second part of the commandment,

which is indispensable to proper love for God, and to the justice which God requires, shall be obeyed. For that matter, neither is a private love for God any guarantee of justice; therefore the second part of the command is intrinsic to the first.

The command to love the neighbour as oneself includes the idea of self-love, but only as the 'measure' of justice and equality; the implicit self-love does not constitute a third command. For Jesus, self-love seems to have been assumed, but requiring radical reinterpretation: "...the measure you give will be the measure you get." (Matt. 7:12). "For where your treasure is there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). "But seek first his kingdom and righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt. 6:33). "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mark 10:21). Jesus reinterpreted the innate self-love of human beings according to principles of justice, by which he issued further strenuous commands illustrating the character of genuine self-love.

The command to love the neighbour as oneself, first disclosed at Mark 12:29-31, is supported by numerous other sayings of Jesus in both the Synoptics and the Johannine literature. It is also supported by St. Paul if, in Paul's ethical advice to the Church, agape is not understood as a 'magic word', but rather the greatest human expression by which the justice required in the Torah might be accomplished (Galatians 5:14, Romans 7:12; 8:4; Ephesians 5:12 ff.). The command to love the neighbour as oneself is not, therefore, an arbitrary Old Testament reference used by Jesus to satisfy the lawyers who were trying to trap him. The principles of justice inherent in the command are particularly evident in two of the most memorable logia of Jesus: "...And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt 6:12). "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt 7:12). The whole Sermon on the Mount, in fact, is both a reinterpretation of love and a reinterpretation of justice. The "holiness"

which God requires (Lev. 19:2) is once more identified in the actions of interhuman justice, yet a greater justice disclosed not in the definitions of law, but rather through the love of one's neighbour as oneself:

> You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt. 5:43-48)

The love command in the Synoptics is not attenuated in the writings of St. John. Although much of the dialogue about love in the Johannine literature occurs between Jesus and his disciples, we need not assume that the command is a gnostic, esoteric, or exclusive word to disciples only. Our 'thesis', that we dwell in Christ's love and in the love of God by keeping his commands, that is, by loving one another as Christ has loved us, complements the command as it is given and interpreted in the Synoptics (cf. John 15:1-17).

In John's writings the commanded love for neighbour, inclusive of strangers and enemies, is reconciled with fraternal love and friendship. The myths and philosophy concerning the spontaneous inclination, or preferential passion, of friendship are not necessarily opposed to Jesus' friendliness. John interprets it as service and self-giving, while retaining and often heightening all the special tenderness binding 'I' and 'thou' through the ages.

> This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:12-15)

In the light of Jesus' command and his eminent example, the meaning of friendship becomes clearer. "Having loved his own...he loved them to the end" (John 13:2). Jesus' friendship was not limited

to his special group of disciples; it was inclusive of lawyers, tax collectors, disciples rich and poor, lepers, Samaritans, deranged Gentiles, and women. Yet, among a few special friends he was able to speak more profoundly and rejoice more humanly. We think particularly of his friendship with Lazarus, upon whose death "Jesus wept." ("See how he loved him!" John 11:36). Pursuing John's interpretation of Jesus' friendship to its greatest implication, the raising of Lazarus was a symbol and a sign of the ultimate power in Jesus' love for his friends, and a call to be his friend by loving others. ("Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." John 15:14). The Johannine Gospel is attributable to one special disciple, "the disciple whom Jesus loved", who knew the power in Jesus' friendship. Although his record probably comes at second hand, glossed with gnostic themes, John's Gospel is a witness to the energy, vitality, and tenderness of friendship, yet also to the inherent pre-requisites of justice, equality, and inclusiveness in all mutual love.[1]

Illustrating the dilemma of duty and spontaneity, the idea of friendship is interpreted by the Fourth Gospel in close affinity with a command. Being Jesus' 'friend' is not decided by spontaneous inclination, but by 'keeping his commands'. Yet the love the command requires, if it is to resemble the love with which Christ loved us, must nevertheless assume spontaneous characteristics. We become Jesus' friends by loving others; i.e. by obeying the command to love the neighbour as oneself. The love commanded is nevertheless a spontaneous, free, joyful, selfless, forgiving, and tender love. Only such a love could be correlative with the love shown by Jesus, and free from the artificial imperatives of legal definition.

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1. We must note again, however, that the word friendship (philia) and the specific concept of mutual love do not appear in any of the Gospels. The closest reference is that of Matt. 5:46 (Luke 6:32): "If you love (agapesete, agapate) (only) those who love (agapontas) you, what reward have you?" A philein form might have been expected if mutuality, as such, was thematic for the evangelists.

Finally, the love required, by God in his call for justice, and by Jesus of his friends, has the character of a commanded spontaneity, a duty to be spontaneous in loving. By recognizing oneself in the other person, and by acknowledging the other's 'rights' before he or she is forced to claim them, we may fulfil the commandment.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, which immediately follows the Lukan version of the dual command to love God and the neighbour as oneself,[1] we find the Greek word which best represents the idea of spontaneous love in the New Testament. "But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion (esplanknisthe) and went to him and bound up his wounds... and took care of him." (Luke 10:33). Meaning 'bowels', the noun splankina has a long history of usage in Rabbinic and Greek literature. The bowels were thought to be the centre of feeling and compassion. Translated "tender mercy" by the RSV, the "bowels of mercy" play a role in Luke's Benedictus:

> ...for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
> to give knowledge of salvation to his people Israel
> in the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender
> mercy (splankna) of our God. (Luke 1:76-78)

There is obviously a link here with God's hesed, his loving compassion throughout the history of the Covenant.

The verb splanknizein is more difficult to translate. Etymologically, it may be linked with the involuntary reflexes of gastric illness. Thus our word 'spontaneous' would be an appropriate adjective, implying a helpless, involuntary 'gushing forth' of feeling, compassion, and tenderness.[2] English requires juxtaposition with a cause or motive, hence the word 'moved' or 'motivated' is necessary

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1. In the Lucan account, the dual command is the response of a lawyer; the parable of the Good Samaritan is apparently Jesus' attempt to make concrete the lawyer's rote reply, by demonstrating the inclusiveness of love of neighbour and also what one must do to be a neighbour. cf. Luke 10:25-37.
2. Although it is no longer appropriate to suggest that the Samaritan's 'bowels moved with involuntary compassion', such a rendering would be true to the text. No more acceptable in formal translation, but relevant to the text, might be an adaptation of modern slang: 'seeing him, he was moved by a gut feeling of sympathy.' The difficulty with this, however, is that a 'gut feeling', usually, does not imply the action inherent in the Greek 'evacuation of bowels'.

to signify feeling that merges into action. The Greek does not need the addition; in connection with feeling in 'the bowels', and the evacuation of this feeling, the idea of spontaneity may be assumed.

Nevertheless, there is implicit in the form esplanknisthen, to be moved with compassion, an assumption of some extraneous motivation. For this reason, Nygren's rule that agape is never 'motivated' appears unjustified. From the numerous references in the Synoptics especially, it seems that the cause or motive for such involuntary evacuation of feeling stems from a sense of identity with the feelings and sufferings of others. "Moved with pity" Jesus cleansed a leper (Mark 1:41). Jesus "had compassion" on a throng because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and began to teach them (Mark 6:34). Jesus acknowledges his own "compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat" (Mark 8:2). Implored to "have pity", Jesus heals an epileptic child (Mark 9:22-27). Jesus "had compassion" on a widow in her grief, and raised her only son (Luke 7:11-15). Jesus tells the parable of the Prodigal Son, for whom his father "had compassion and ran and embraced and kissed him" (Luke 15:11 ff). In another parable, a creditor, "out of pity", frees his slave and forgives him his debt (Matt. 18:23 ff). "In pity", Jesus touched the eyes of two blind men, "and immediately they received their sight and followed him" (Matt 20:34).

The onus, indeed the 'imperative' for action stemming from 'tender affections ' (splankna) 'moved' by identification with the needs of others, is underlined by the word's single appearance in the Johannine literature:

> But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart (splankna) against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth. (I John 3:17-18)

The energy in the idea esplanknisthen, if not the same word, often appears in the Johannine writings. Most poignantly and

powerfully the idea occurs at Lazarus' funeral:

> Then Mary, when he came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved (enebrimesato) in spirit and troubled...Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"
>
> Then Jesus, deeply moved (embrimomenos) again, came to the tomb; it was a cave and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." (John 11:32 ff.)

The word embrimaomai suggests yet another kind of active evacuation, a groan, snort, or sneeze, also 'spontaneous' and from the depths of one's being. In ancient times such involuntary reflexes were held to indicate divine or magical influence.[1] Although we no longer attribute such meaning to them, we may find other ways to illustrate the latent power in involuntary, 'spontaneous' feelings which nevertheless entail their own integral 'motivation'.

Whether such evacuations of feeling and tenderness may really be 'commanded' is unclear, but it is not the issue. At bottom, the 'command' deals with the capacity for being authentically human, for developing in one's social relations a deep sense of self, best revealed precisely in one's identification with the feelings, needs, sufferings and joys of other human beings. The command to love is really a command to be human, and to demonstrate that humanity by preserving and enriching it in intimate relatedness to every other creature. (Perhaps Albert Schweitzer's "reverence for life" is not far off the mark.) The Gospel proclaims the power in human tenderness, and beckons it toward greater spontaneous expression in correlation with "the tender mercy of our God." (Luke 1:78). The tenderness we are able to express is often frustrated, weakened by self-interest, and limited by our imagination and the will to allow our identification with others to melt into just concrete action. Nevertheless, the spontaneity of tenderness is required, indeed commanded,

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1. cf. Plato, The Symposium, 189 "I wonder why the harmonious construction of our body should require such noisy operations as sneezing..."

for all who aspire to be friends and followers of Jesus.

> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion (splankna oiktirmou), kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
> (Colossians 3:12-14)

So the early Church construed the call to discipleship. "What our age lacks," said Kierkegaard, "is not reflection, but passion."[1] And in passionate tenderness for the neighbour in need lie also the origins of justice.

3. Justice: Repentance and Practice

The theological concept of love in respect to justice awaits further discussion. Our study may best contribute to that discussion, and to the integrated practice which it envisions, if a few concise and concrete principles can be discerned for a more authentic synthesis of love and justice. The primary emphases of the authors examined in this study do not lend themselves to a simple synthesis. The following is my own subjective assessment of the most critical relationships influencing the conception of love in close affinity with the issues of justice, and arising during the course of this study.

(1) Repentance

In almost all of the authors examined above, there lies implicit in the characterization of love a call to repentance and the remediation of concepts and practices leading to injustice. Feuerbach and Kierkegaard were critical of Christianity's affiliation with oppressive power structures in alliance with philosophy and theology. Nygren and the early neo-orthodox theologians called for genuine love for

1. Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, op. cit. p. 53

human beings undeflected by egocentric emphases upon love for God. Karl Barth challenged theologians and the Church to acknowledge the human capacity for sin, unremovable by the liberal emphasis upon God's love and human progress. The Latin American theologians are a witness to the poverty and suffering created by nominally Christian political and economic forces, perpetuating injustice and inequality.

Throughout the discussion of love, there lies in the background the violence and misery created by inordinate and egocentric love of self (pride, hubris, superbia, cupiditas). Although we have discerned a place for proper self-love, the evil in egocentrism, chauvinism, and exclusivism remains. Jesus, the Gospel of Mark proclaims, came into Galilee preaching repentance (Mark 1:14). The Greek word metanoia has no precise English equivalent; the word, like splanknizthein, implies an integration of motivation and action. For Jesus, the repentance required was not to be separated from the total individual and social response to God's coming kingdom, a kingdom in which justice might be written on the hearts of human beings (Micah 4:1-4; 6:8). Jesus' encounters with gentiles, pharisees, rich and poor alike, contain evidence of the continual call to repentance, "a change of mode of thought and feeling", correlating with "a change of principle and practice".[1] Jesus' encounter with the the rich young man (Mark 10:17 ff. and parallels) is about the kind of repentance Jesus envisioned. Love's justice proceeds not from external obedience to any moral code, but from a genuine identity with, and compassion for, one's fellow human being. Only such a repentance could correlate with the implicit justice in God's coming kingdom, and with the radical response of practice preached by Jesus.

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1. cf. Bagster's Analytical Greek Lexicon, Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., London, 1870; revised 1977; edited by H.K. Moulton

(2) Justice Beyond Law

Much of the tension between love and justice seems to derive from an interpretation of justice as more or less equivalent to the idea of law. In Christian theology after the Reformation, this tension has been highlighted by the opposition of spontaneous love, discerned in agape according to Pauline usage, to the Hebraic code developed from the decalogue. Nygren's opposition of agape to nomos is characteristic. Similarly, the opposition between love and law is present in Brunner's emphasis upon the 'orders' and Reinhold Niebuhr's distinction between ideal love and practical justice. Karl Barth and Alfred North Whitehead, however, implied that law proceeds from grounds of justice which are prior to legal codification. Barth observed that the Torah was an expression of social relationships God wished to preserve for his people; in the community was the true ground of the Hebrew law, not reducible to the law itself. Barth observed the connection between Jesus' commandment to love and the summation of the 'justice code' at Levitious 19:18 and 33. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" was an ancient summation of the call for justice, quoted and affirmed by Jesus. On these grounds alone, it would be difficult to argue that Christian love and justice, or a balanced respect for the law, are diametrically opposed. Nor may 'justice' be reduced to 'law'.

Whitehead saw justice as an 'absolute' quality in God, but variable and relative for humanity and civilization. Optimally, justice codes should provide for the general welfare, while preserving possibilities for individuals. But beyond the relative justice which is capable of 'explanation' by law, there lies a 'vision' of human behaviour not capable of juridical interpretation. It was this intimacy, between love and morality, which the early Christians saw represented in Christ's teaching, and attempted to integrate into their small communities. But on the large scale, such an intimacy is difficult to imitate. Across the centuries commerce and customs

have been given legislative forms, conditioned by numerous forces but always subject to change and improvement. These provisional laws are only partially representative of justice at any time, but they may preserve the possibilities of better and more equitable laws, and a greater justice to be represented by them in succeeding societies.

Jesus, apparently, had no objection to the law of his day insofar as it was an instrument of justice. He did imply that laws are implemented for the service of humanity, and for the promotion of genuine love. He instructed the rich young man to observe the law; but after further discussion, he also challenged him to act humanly, equitably, and generously, uninhibited by its partial definition of goodness (Mark 10:20 f). Law is unable to represent the justice between human beings that Christ required of his followers. But at the same time it is necessary, as a tool of justice, in the promotion and preservation of possibilities for love. Martin Luther King stated succinctly the ambivalent nature of law in relation to love: "The law may not be able to make a man love me, but it can prevent him from lynching me."[1] Laws may be made more representative of justice, more humane, equitable, and at the same time merciful. Law need not be opposed to love, for it may preserve the environment in which love is possible. But insofar as law does indeed represent "the fence and the boundary line" (Niebuhr), it may distribute justice without exhausting the concept of justice, nor limiting the practice of love, by which ever greater justice is inspired and beckoned.

(3) Love for God: A Social Concept

Despite various interpretations of 'love', one of the most common emphases among our authors is a critique of 'vertical' piety. For Feuerbach, love for God was misplaced love for humanity. For Kierkegaard, the passion of faith must be demonstrated and preserved through the duty to love the neighbour. For Nygren, 'love for God'

1. Quoted in Peter D. Bishop, A Technique for Loving, SCM Press, London, 1981, p. 108.

was reinterpreted as faith, as agape was reserved for God's unconditional love for others, working through faith. Stress on love for God entailed acquisitive love, an eros in search of a 'private good'. Although Barth did indeed suggest that God may be loved in response to his grace, such a love for God would be inadequate without a corresponding love for humanity, active and self-giving. The liberation theologians insist that only as the neighbour is loved may one love God, in the person of the neighbour, through the 'sacrament of the neighbour'. For them, there is no other way to love God, since there is a 'palpable' identity between God and the neighbour in need.

Jesus' command to love God and the neighbour as oneself is very likely indivisible in its components. The second command is 'like', or equal in value to the first, inseparable from it. Jesus preaches a God who may indeed be loved, and who is worthy of love. At the same time he counsels that piety apart from involvement in the world, identifying with the needs of the neighbour, is not proper love for God. (cf. Matt. 25:31 ff.) While prayer, worship, and meditation remained a part of Jesus' relationship to his father, Jesus' piety was continually set in a broad social context. If our concept of love is to correspond with that of Jesus, it appears that we must be careful not to divorce 'love for God' from love for the neighbour. But the complement of love for the neighbour remains 'love for God'. In the social context of worship, proper and 'efficacious' love for others may be constantly criticized, redeemed, renewed and nurtured through the activity of that socially enervating and creative force promised wherever two or three are gathered. The concept of human love for God appears to be a thoroughly social notion. The social context of Jesus' integrated love for his father, his friends, his opponents, and the 'poor' is disclosed in the New Testament. Because love for God entails such broad social relations, the concerns of justice appear to be intrinsic to all piety and worship.

(4) Justice Beyond Equality

The justice represented in legal codes must be broadly grounded upon egalitarian principles if laws are to succeed in bringing maximum safeguards to masses of persons with conflicting interests. Nevertheless, because law necessarily imposes arbitrary limits for behaviour representative of the interests of 'the ruling classes' (according to Marx and Engels), even in the most 'democratic' legislative systems there is a tendency for law to discriminate against the powerless and economically deprived. At best, the ideals of justice inherent in any legal code are reduced to the 'lowest common denominator' only broadly applicable to the totality of diverse claims and interests in any given society.

The criterion of 'equality', therefore, cannot exhaust the concept of justice. Even in the most egalitarian societies, there are diverse needs arising from great dissimilarity in social competence, health, geographic location, prior advantages, and so on. Due to the need for special consideration of individual needs, justice may not be always achieved by a strictly egalitarian approach to juridical systems.

In recognition of the inadequacy of egalitarian ideals, Nygren, Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr tended to oppose Christian love to the assumption of 'equality' in society. Niebuhr could say that "a better justice is always a more equal justice", but at the same time he viewed such a justice impracticable. Brunner asserted that the assumption of equality destroys life by limiting individual potential. In the case of Niebuhr and Brunner, their critique of equality as the basis of social systems seems to be linked with a preference for capitalist 'democratic' systems of government over socialist and communist alternatives. Therefore, I suspect, their critiques of egalitarian principles are subject to other interpretations. Latin American liberation theologians, perhaps too uncritically, identify the idea of equality with the idea of justice; indeed

'equality' seems often to be a synonym for justice.

The relation between equality and justice is not easily definable. A theological approach to the command to love the neighbour as oneself, so that the self is acknowledged to be no more important before God than the neighbour, and so that justice for oneself is somehow contingent upon the justice available to the neighbour, seems to be required. Similarly, justice for the other may not be achievable without a willingness to assert the just claims of the self. Refusing to cooperate in unequal systems subjugating one's own just claims to the oppressive will of others may be one way of achieving justice for others. Certainly the civil rights movements led by Gandhi and Martin Luther King lend credibility to this approach. Claiming equality for oneself, without subjugating others in the process, may entail action which might seem 'selfish', but in the long term may result in a greater distribution of justice. In this regard, we remember Gene Outka's malfunction of the 'Golden Rule': "Do unto others as <u>they</u> would have you do unto them" is not the Christian precept.

Generally the concerns of justice seem to be intimately bound with the practical principles that promote broad equality among human beings. Nevertheless, since laws are chronically inadequate, and since human existence is always conditioned by opportunities and experiences which are <u>not</u> the same, then justice must take account of the rich diversity. Political systems may indeed be based upon egalitarian principles, with the <u>proviso</u> that the unique individual or group is not to be defined by them.

Thus, I would suggest, there is much to be said for the explicitly Marxist and implicitly Christian ideal of justice which includes but is not determined by the assumption of equality: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need". This ideal may be informed and nurtured in a global context through continual emphasis upon individual ethical precepts stressed by Jesus,

including especially the 'Golden Rule' and conformity with the command to love the neighbour as oneself. Correlative justice is also entailed in the commands to love one's enemies, to feed, clothe, and shelter the poor, and to strive for reciprocal love in community according to the commandment to "love one another". Kierkegaard's insistence that only between equals is love genuinely possible challenges us to make equals of every neighbour.

(5) The Ideal Beyond the Relative

In his book Love, Power, and Justice, Paul Tillich attempted to discover the ontological foundations for these phenomena so important to life, history and the future.[1] Tillich suggested an 'ultimate relationship' between love, power, and justice undetermined by the contingent experience of humanity. Although we have not had occasion to examine Tillich's point of view, his suggestion that there might be an ultimate justice, ontologically related to an ultimate love, and undetermined by the frustrations of historical time and circumstance, requires continued consideration among theologians. It is not clear that we always know what we mean when we use the terms love and justice; as we have observed in the course of this symposium, the attempt to define each individually has occupied the work of many thinkers. The exposition of the interdependence and intimacy between them, both ontological and phenomenological, may challenge the minds of many to come.

The cumulative views of our authors above, despite their differences, encourage us to continue searching for new 'grounds' of justice. Hegel and Feuerbach suggested that the ground of justice may lie in the I-thou encounter, in which one person identifies with his neighbour, senses the neighbour's need as immanent within his own feelings, discovering the wealth of common thoughts, purposes, and desires in the process. The 'I' responds to the needs of the 'thou'

1. Paul Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice, Oxford University Press, 1954

because the needs, and feelings of need, are shared and interpreted, mediated by the imagination.

Making a connection with the commands of justice in the New Testament, we might suggest that the command to love the neighbour 'as yourself' illustrates the dynamic potential for justice in the I-thou encounter. A person who 'spontaneously' loves his or her friend, spouse, or family member yields that other person's rights before they are codified and demanded. This spontaneous justice may also be observed in Jesus' illustration of fatherhood in God: he knows our needs before we ask him. One possible view of the foundations of justice, the ideal which criticizes our practice, is, therefore, the justice which is distributed without being demanded, selflessly, yet in simultaneous self-fulfilment. The parent cares for the child, and provides the needs for growth. The lover is considerate toward the beloved. The friend is spontaneously hospitable. A driver may offer a lift because he himself knows how it feels to hitch-hike.

In such relationships as these there is justice which no law could legislate, yet no law is needed. The small considerate actions of social life presuppose an essential relatedness and identification of feeling between persons. Whether enacted out of 'social duty', 'spontaneously', or from conscious attempts to achieve self-benefit, polite actions of consideration toward others entail an indispensable and indefinable element of justice. Only when conventions are disagreed upon, or when there is significant abuse, are they usually codified as law. "The Rules of the Road", for example, do a fair job of legislating principles which many drivers might observe from a tendency to be polite and considerate. There are laws that govern the care of children, but most parents do not need the laws. In summation, what we call justice is often an extension of social considerations which have tended to maximize safety in coexistence with others. But the justice was there before the laws were written

down, for the majority of persons who have learned to live together in small and greater communities have not needed laws to constrain them in their common social encounters. There is a vision of justice in such encounters, to which codified systems may aspire, and from which the ideals of justice partially proceed.

Reinhold Niebuhr continually reminded us that the ideals of justice inherent in Jesus' teaching are not realizable in history due to the conflict of interests among groups and individuals. The justitia originalis, as he interpreted it, present in the Sermon on the Mount and other logia of Jesus, calls humanity to admit its inability to measure up to the ideal. The human capacity to achieve a 'relative justice' through better 'justice-structures' should not be bound to the ideal, but influenced by the feasibility of legislative systems in any given social order. Due to his assessment of its feasibility, Niebuhr gave only qualified support to the civil rights movement of the fifties; he would not support total racial integration at the time because he judged it impractical. Later liberation theologians have been critical of Niebuhr's approach. His insights about the possibilities of justice within a given social order and political system, however, cannot be completely written off. But neither need they be uncritically adopted.

Latin American and other theologians of liberation continue to set possibilities of practical justice-structures in line with the ideals of Jesus' preaching about the kingdom of God. The extent to which such ideals are historically practicable remains to be seen. Certainly we may argue that our attempts to establish justice have rarely measured up to Jesus' teaching. Nevertheless, an a priori limitation of the ideals by means of a subjective and perhaps 'ideological' interpretation of what is 'feasible' may perpetuate misery where we might have 'had a go' in making the ideals practical. The liberationists' call for justice, without questioning its feasibility, seems to correlate with much of Jesus' kerygma. The cautious views of many Northern theologians, on the other hand, may shield

a conscious or unconscious alliance with the forces that perpetuate oppression and injustice. Although caution is certainly required, particularly regarding violent measures, theologians of affluent cultures may no longer decide for the world what methods may be employed in promoting justice. As the Latin Americans observe, academic viewpoints from the universities have often been ignorant of the suffering mandating radical methods for those who experience it.

One 'academic viewpoint' which may continue to bear upon the concept of justice, however, is that of Alfred North Whitehead. Whitehead spoke of a 'vision' inherent in Galilean Christianity that continually criticizes our attempts to achieve relative justice in civilizations. "It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love; and it finds purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved; also it is a little oblivious as to morals. It does not look to the future, but it finds its own reward in the immediate present."[1] Whitehead interpreted justice as a relative concept in Christianity, which continues to be related to an 'absolute' in God's conceptual nature. That persuading, luring justice, immanent in the origins of Galilean Christianity, may continue to be the ideal which beckons, criticizes, and sustains our inadequate attempts to establish justice on earth. Intimate to the lure of justice in God are the intuitions of love between human beings, 'a little oblivious as to morals', needing no codification to constrain action. For Whitehead, such intuitions might issue in civilization as 'Peace', a holistic concept in which love and justice do not need to be distinguished.

Although Whitehead's vision challenges theological theory and practice, the practical effect of his thought has not yet taken shape. His views await the formulation of a thoroughly practical theology

1. Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality, op. cit. p. 485

by those who follow process enquiry. Jürgen Moltmann has defined the priorities which may determine the service of process theology to a suffering humanity:

> I am not so much interested in Whitehead in regard to his process-thought and his 'becoming God' with a primordial and consequent nature, though I like his phrase about God as 'the great companion - the fellow-sufferer who understands'. My co-suffering reason would wish to know what is going on in his divinity in relationship to those abandoned, starved, bereft of their own name and their honor, and what practical consequences follow for the philosopher and theologian. Electromagnetic fields do not interest me relative to a religious Weltanschauung congenial to my scientific reason, but relative to the electrification of the shacks of sharecroppers in North Carolina and the slums of Nairobi...[1]

Moltmann's view of Whitehead himself may be somewhat unfair, but the practical concerns and needs of human beings beg attention from Whitehead's students if metaphysical interpretation is to influence practice in civilization. The ideals of justice may continue to influence relative practice if, in the common feelings of genuine love between persons, we envision and apply the latent criteria of justice.

EPILOGUE

Whitehead's interpretation of 'the eros of the universe' is a fitting climax to our symposium, but it is not the end. The end is a telos, not a terminus; a purpose comprised of countless purposes; it is energy, a stream which flows on, sooner or later carrying us with it. Ours is the choice of swimming with the current, or being carried from pool to pool, impeding the progress of others. Loving is certainly a feeling, a passion to which we are subject; but it is not merely our passion or our feeling. It is the expression of something, or someone, demanding our best, our deepest, our highest. Loving tenderly, justly, we share in a greater love, our loves perfected in a greater joy.

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1. Jürgen Moltmann, Hope and the Future of Man, 1972; quoted in Alasdair Heron, A Century of Protestant Theology, Lutterworth, London, 1980, p. 214

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